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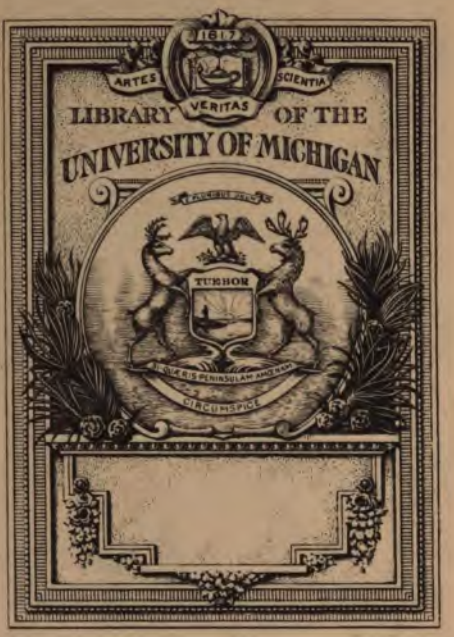
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THE WORKS

OF

THOMAS JACKSON, D.D.

SOMETIME

PRESIDENT OF CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,
AND DEAN OF PETERBOROUGH.

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DIVERS SERMONS,

WITH

A SHORT TREATISE

BEFITTING THESE PRESENT TIMES.

120901

TO

THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE

CHARLES,

PRINCE OF WALES, DUKE OF CORNWALL, &c.

All the blessings of this life, and of the life to come.

WOULD your Excellence vouchsafe, if not at your best conveniences to read, yet for the present to accept these treatises following with the like favourable patience as your royal father, and my most gracious sovereign lord and master, did hear the most of them, I should think my pains in publishing and offering this mite as well bestowed and as well recompensed as any other part of my labours in the ministry. That you may long exhibit to this present and future ages a live expression of your most royal father's princely virtues, especially of his devotion in God's service, and his zeal to his house the church; that by continuance in thus doing you may continue in like favour with the King of kings and Lord of lords as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and other best princes of Judah were, is and shall be the daily prayer of

Your Highness' most humbly
devoted servant,

THOMAS JACKSON.

A SERMON

ON

2 CHRONICLES VI. 39, 40.

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place.

1. IT was the saying of a Roman senator, who thought himself well seen in matters of state, *Parvi sunt arma foris, nisi sit consilium domi;* "Arms are of little avail abroad, without a wise council at home to give them instructions:" but the wise king, part of whose words these of my text are, saw a great way further, and lays his foundation much deeper, *Parvi sunt arma foris, parvi consilium domi, nisi sint preces in templo;* "Council of state or council of war, arms at home, or armies sent abroad by their directions, with their best instructions, add little to the security and safety of state and kingdom, without prayers in the church, or house of God." And for this reason, although he had now erected a goodly temple, with as princely and cheerful a heart as his father David had built an altar, unto the name and honour of the God of Israel; yet he thought it no sacrilege, no robbery at all, to intend

a public and perpetual benefit to the state and kingdom, from this glorious work. So compatible are royal intentions of God's honour with desires of God's blessings temporal upon the people committed to their charge, that this wise king, (even whilst he dedicates this great house unto his God, for a peculiar habitation, wherein he would be pleased to place his name,) yet consecrated it withal as a sanctuary for every afflicted soul; to be more than an arsenal for war; as a magazine of medicines, and remedies for all manner of wounds or diseases incident to the body public.

2. God had given this young king a large talent of princely wisdom, and the spirit of government in
292 an extraordinary manner; and of this extraordinary wisdom and spirit one special part it was, to know that it was not in the power of man, not within the compass of any wisdom, (though participated from above,) to direct his own ways, much less the ways of others, aright; least of all, to give success to their best directions. As the skill of pilots is best known in a storm or dangerous passage, so is the wisdom of rulers best tried in perplexity or distress: the best proof or trial which Solomon could give of his wisdom in this case was the knowledge to frame his petitions aright to the God of wisdom and Lord of hosts. This whole chapter is no other than an anatomy lecture of the diseases and wounds of kingdoms and commonweals, publicly read by Solomon, for the instruction of princes and rulers that should come after him. It is *the glory of a king*, as this king elsewhere observes, *to find out a secret*, and to punish iniquity when it is found out (though committed in secret); and to render to every man according to the equity of his cause, being made known, is the duty of a judge: but inasmuch as many controversies of right and wrong

must be determined by oath, if men will be so destitute of the fear of God as to swear falsely, or to contrive their own gain and others' harms by perjury, what judge can help? what prince can remedy men by this means distressed? Yet Solomon begins at this inward sore, or secret corruption; the remedy he seeks from the Searcher of men's thoughts and hearts: so he prays, 2 Chron. vi. 22, 23, *If a man sin against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to make him swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; then hear thou from heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, by requiting the wicked, by recompensing his way upon his own head; and by justifying the righteous, by giving him according to his righteousness.* To recompense the ways of this wicked man upon his own head is one of the mercies which, in conclusion, he beseeches the Lord to shew unto his people, for *crudele est hic misericordem esse.* Though mercy be always good, yet the better it is, the worse it is placed upon such pestilent members: as great a cruelty to shew pity upon the perjured, as to pamper or cherish any joint or member of the body wherein the gangrene, or other deadly spreading sore, hath got possession or root. From this internal, inbred corruption, he proceeds unto more public and grievous wounds or diseases usually made by causes external; as, when Israel shall be *overthrown before their enemies,* ver. 25; when the *heavens shall be shut up, and the earth be without rain,* ver. 26; when there shall be *famine, pestilence, mildew, grasshoppers, or caterpillars;* when the *enemy shall besiege thee in the cities;* when they shall be *afflicted by any plague or sickness,* ver. 28. The sovereign remedy for all and every one of these and the like is the very same; and it is this, vv. 20, 21: *Then hear thou from heaven,*

from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee. ver. 29. But what if this people should be led captive into a foreign land, not permitted to repair unto this house *where the Lord had placed his name?* this Solomon foresaw as a matter not impossible, how ample soever his promises unto his father David and his seed might in ordinary construction seem to be: is there any possible salve for this possible sore? or can this house (which he had consecrated to be an house of prayer) afford them in this case any remedy, when they could not come to pray in it? Yes; the remedy is prescribed, vv. 38, 39:
293 *If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name: then hear thou from heaven,* &c. So then both prince and people were to pray *in* this house, whilst they possessed this land and city wherein it stood; to pray *towards* it, when they sojourned in foreign coasts, or were detained in the land of their captivity; to pray towards the place wherein it had stood, in case it should be demolished. So did Daniel, after this house which Solomon built was burnt to the ground.

3. The prerogatives which he petitions might be bestowed upon this house of prayer were, you see, exceeding great. Was it then any part of his intention in the suit, or of God's purpose in the grant, to have this house endowed with such ample privileges for the use or benefit of Israel only, or of Abraham's seed according to the flesh? Surely Solomon did conceive his prayers out of a perfect and special faith, yet the

speciality of his faith in God's promises made unto Israel, or to Abraham's seed, did no way extinguish his charity, or abate his good affection towards others, for he expressly consecrates his house to be an house of prayer for the use and benefit of all the nations under heaven, though in the first place for Israel. *Moreover as touching the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house; then hear thou from heaven, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that the people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name.* vv. 32, 33. He knew the gracious goodness of his God to be in itself so great, so truly infinite, that it could not be a whit lessened towards Israel, how far soever it were extended towards others, as it is extended to all men without exception *in sensu diviso*, though not *in sensu composito;* it is thus far extended unto all, to the end that they might come to the knowledge of the truth, but not extended, not communicated to such as love darkness better than light, and falsehood than truth. It was then well with Israel, when their charity towards others was like their heavenly Father's love, without factious partiality or respect of persons. It was their seeking to engross God's promised blessings unto mankind which twice brought that grievous curse upon them, under which at this day they sigh and groan. Now if all the nations on earth had this interest in Solomon's temple, shall we deny any one, of what nation soever, the like interest in Abraham's seed, concerning whom the Lord had

sworn, that in him should all the nations of the earth be blessed? Thus much of the general scope or view of this chapter, to retire myself unto my text, which is as the centre or fittest angle for taking the exact survey of this long and fruitful field.

4. To give you then a brief comprehension of the principallest and most fundamental truths, either directly incident into, or naturally emergent out of it:

First, It is taken as granted by Solomon, and it is to us as a point of faith, that as well the calamities as the prosperities of states and kingdoms are from the 294 Lord; it is he that giveth life as well to bodies politic as to natural; it is he that woundeth, and it is he that maketh whole.

Secondly, No calamity or wounds of state are in their nature incurable, if the remedy be sought in time; they grow incurable only by neglect of the medicines in God's word prescribed.

Thirdly, The only sovereign remedy for restoring states and kingdoms diseased and wounded by the hand of God unto their perfect health, is prayer and supplications to the King of kings.

The last must be the conditions of the prayers, or qualification of the supplicants, by whom such prayers as may prevail with God must be made. Upon this point Solomon often toucheth in several passages of this chapter.

Such of the heathens as were always ready to sacrifice unto their own right arms for victory in battle, and unto their own wit in policy for the sweet fruits of peace, did often observe certain surpluses of success, good or bad, which they could not account to be the natural issue either of their industry or contrivance; and whatsoever fell without the mould of their

hopes or fears was attributed to Fates, if it were disastrous; to Fortune or Chance, if it were good: now whatsoever the heathens did ascribe to Fortune, to Chance, or Fate, or to any other supposed guide of nature or intermeddling power in human affairs, all these the wise king ascribes wholly unto his God; he is the God of peace, and yet the God that maketh war, the Lord of hosts; the God of plenty, and yet the God that sendeth scarcity; the God of our health and life, and yet it is he which punisheth with plague and sicknesses. Nor are we bound only to derive all extraordinary success, (which the heathen gave to fortune and fate,) but ever even the usual success of ordinary endeavours (be it good or bad) from his providence. That the heathens did ascribe ordinary success, if it were good, unto themselves, if it were ill, unto their adversaries or opposites, this was their atheism or irreligion; that they ascribed extraordinary calamity unto fate, or chance, was their superstition. Unto both these extremes true religion is alike opposite, and for this reason must ascribe all success, ordinary or extraordinary, good or bad, unto him, who is a God as well of wisdom as of power, as well of peace as of war. The Egyptian magicians were enforced to say of some miracles wrought by Moses, *Hic digitus Dei est*, "The finger of God is in this." But if we look on God's works, or our own, with the eyes of faith, the point of his hand is more conspicuous, or more full in matters of ordinary pass, or in the usual course of nature, than in some rare miracles. If the sun should now stand still in its sphere, as in the days of Joshua it did, the world would be ready to say, This is the hand of God; yet it is more impossible that it should move without God's power than stand still without it; whilst it stood still, it was partaker only of his power

sustentative, but deprived of his power motive or co-operative; move it cannot without the cooperation of his motive power; nor could it continue movable, though without motion, for a moment of time, without continuance of his creative and preserving power: and thus in the continuance of ordinary success or blessings upon man's endeavours, there is ofttimes a greater concurrence of Divine communicative power than is required unto success extraordinary: for the mere subtraction of his usual cooperation or efficiency from us, or from such as oppose us, makes the success of
295 the one or other to be extraordinary; and yet so blind and stupid are we, for the most part, that we take small notice of his ordinary presence by his wisdom, power, and providence, without some interpositions of extraordinary success, unexpected occurrences, or interruption of the ordinary course of time and nature.

Did the body of the sun alway move beyond his horizon, in such difference from it as to leave no evident distinction between light and darkness, we should hardly know how much our eyes are beholding to it for the use of its light. Many haply will be persuaded that the light of their eyes were sufficient to see withal: God, who is the light and life of the world, by whose participation the best faculties of men perform their proper functions, (as the eye doth its function by the bodily light of the sun,) is in his nature invisible; and hence it is that few conceive what entire dependance they have on him in all their actions and consultations, unless it please him sometimes to withdraw his guidance or assistance from them; nor need we deny or question the proper efficacy of any visible or second causes, albeit we ascribe all success, as well ordinary as extraordinary, good or bad, unto the same God. The matter of most sovereign bodily medicines is ofttimes

gathered from the patients' gardens; the physician infuseth no new quality or hidden virtue into the simples or ingredients; yet, inasmuch as he tempers and compounds them, and appoints in what measure and season his receipt should be taken, the recovery of health, though wrought by the efficacy of the medicine, is wholly ascribed to the physician's skill, not shared betwixt it and the natural qualities of the medicine. Admit, of a thousand fighting men no one man's strength or courage were abated before the day of battle, yet, if every one then might be permitted to fight, as we say, on his own head, to come on and off at his own liking, the multiplication of their several strength, without a guiding or directing power, might harm themselves more than their enemies; so that we might truly say, that albeit our army consists of common soldiers as well as of commanders, yet the strength of an army consists not in the strength of limbs, but in the skill and moderation of their commanders, and in the observance of good orders and discipline. Now beside the especial dependance which every particular creature hath on the Creator's power, in all his motions, attempts, or actions, which is such as no ingredient in any medicine hath on the physician—such as no soldier hath on his commander—the whole host of creatures, whether sublunary or celestial, whether reasonable or reasonless, whether animate or without life, is more subordinate to the direction and guidance of the Divine Wisdom and Providence than any inferior can be to his lawful, most powerful, and most esteemed superior. Though God doth not always work alone, but every creature works in him and by him in its kind, yet he alone appoints the time, the place, and opportunity of their workings; he alone appoints the issue which they

finally bring forth; he alone doth limit the number of coworking causes, or of agents conspiring for the effecting of the end designed by his providence; whence, though in the greatest achievements jointly undertaken by man, every man might know his own and every other's strength, his own and every other's projects which are confederates or coworkers with him; though every one could know all the preparation which they severally or jointly make, what is the determinate
296 force or efficacy of every instrumental cause whose help they use; yet is it never possible for them to know what other causes or agents the wisdom of God may design, either to hinder them, or to further their enemies in their counterplots. So that all prosperity or calamity of any nation, visibly inflicted by secondary instruments or agents, is justly ascribed unto the wisdom, justice, and providence of God. *Can a bird fall in a snare* (saith the prophet Amos, iii. 5) *upon the earth, where no gin is for him?* or *shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?* Men, he supposeth, are as unwilling to be overtaken with the evil here meant, with *malum pœnæ*, with calamity or disaster, as birds are to be caught in a snare. Calamity then is the snare whereinto men by God's appointment fall, and their own projects and devices are the strings which draw this net upon them, when these are contrary to the counsel of the Lord. And if there be no evil of calamity or disaster in any city which is not the Lord's doing, then, certainly, the good which is contrary to this evil, all the safety, welfare, and prosperity of any nation, is from the Lord, is the work of his hand.

Ignorance, or want of belief of this point, was one special cause of the miseries which befell the Christian nations, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals,

and other barbarous people; so a sweet and learned writer of those times complains *Si quando enim nobis prosperi aliquid præter spem nostram et meritum, Deus tribuit, alius ascribit hoc fortunæ, alius eventui, alius ordinationi ducum, alius consilio, alius magistro, alius patrocinio, nullus Deo; et miramur si nobis cœlestis manus non præstet, cui quicquid præstiterit derogamus:* "If God at any time give prosperous success to our proceedings beyond our hope and merit, one ascribes this to fortune, another to good hap or chance, none to God." We may conclude this point with the psalmist's testimony: *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* Psalm cxxvii. 1. We shall no way pervert his words, if we thus invert or extend their sense: "Except the Lord be purposed to ruinate the house, they labour in vain that seek to ruinate it: except the Lord delivers up the city into their hands, they that besiege it besiege it in vain: and if all endeavours without his ratification of them be vain, then it is he that doth all in all; it is he, not the air, elements, or host of heaven, that bringeth scarcity, famine, or pestilence upon the land; it is he, not the enemy, which wounds or weakens any state or kingdom."

But if all calamity be inflicted by his hand, who can take off what he hath laid on, who can heal where the great Physician himself hath wounded? But the question is not, what man can do when any calamity befalls him, but rather, what He which can do all things will have man to do for himself. Now it is not his will that we should in this case sit down and do nothing. The ascribing of all the success of our labours unto Him, doth teach us only to abandon all reliance upon our own endeavours or consultations, not the con-

sultations or endeavours themselves; it should be the first and last of all our endeavours, carefully to consecrate all our consultations and enterprises unto Him who alone is able to give a blessing unto them. It is most true, all our strength is but weakness in respect of Him; yet true with this exception, unless we rely upon his strength: it is true, man's wisdom is but folly; and yet true again, that our wisdom becomes more than man's wisdom, by relying upon his wisdom
297 with the strength of our hearts and affections. Now for the strengthening of our reliance upon his wisdom strength, and providence, and for consecrating our endeavours aright, two things are required: 1. the right information of our understanding in point of doctrine; 2. sincerity of practice, answerable to the right information of our understanding. The first and general part of doctrine is the second point proposed, 'That no calamity or wound in state, though inflicted by the immediate hand of God, is altogether incurable, if the remedy be sought in time.' This point of doctrine is grounded upon another special principle of faith, to wit, that our gracious God, in his severest punishments, is a most just Judge, he doth not so immediately delight in the exercises of punitive justice, as he doth in the exercises of justice, mercies, and loving-kindnesses. He bestows his blessings of prosperity freely, and for his own name's sake, not for our sakes or deservings. He never plagueth any nation merely for his own name's sake, or of his own accord, but as provoked by their ill deservings. *Deus non prius est ultor quam homo peccator:* "God never proceeds to revenge before man hath done him manifest wrong." *Pœna semper sequitur culpam:* "Punishment never hath precedency of offences, but always follows them, and for the most part in great distance." This truth,

or principle of faith, is expressly supposed by the wise king in this chapter, ver. 24: *And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before their enemy, because they have sinned against thee.* This infers, that they should not be punished with so much as loss of victory, or defeat, unless they had first sinned against their God. And again, ver. 26: *When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee.* This teacheth us the truth of that which an ancient father hath, *Nos mutamus naturam rerum,* "We exchange the nature of the creature, and divert the sweet influence of heaven from ourselves by changing from better to worse, and by our turning from God." *Quid ergo? de pœnarum acerbitate quærimur, unusquisque nostrum ipse se punit.* They are the expostulation of Salvian[a] with the Christians of his time, which had been often overcome, and long pressed by barbarous and heretical nations: "But why do we complain that our punishment is bitter and grievous, seeing every one of us doth punish himself?" But here haply some will make that objection against the former point which Salvian makes against himself by way of prevention, 'If all punishment or calamity be from God, how are we said to punish ourselves?' His answer is very satisfactory, *Utrumque verum est, a Deo quippe punimur, sed ipsi facimus ut puniamur*[b]: "Both are true; we are punished by God, but it is our own doing that we are punished." The manner and order by which mankind fall into extremity of punishment, whether temporal or everlasting, that he collects out of that saying of the prophet Isaiah, ch. l. 11.

This good father, albeit he lived in the miserable times wherein the visible feature of Christ's church and of Christendom was much defaced by the wounds

[a] Lib. 4. (num. 107.) p. 75. [b] Lib. 8. (num. 264.) p. 186.

and scars which had been given by barbarous hands, yet was herein happy, that he might freely avouch the unspeakable mercies of God, and extend his unfeigned love to all, (even to those which perished in their sins,) without censure of heresy or persecution by men of his own profession. It was no scruple to his tender conscience to aver, nor was the often averring it any imputation unto him for many generations, that God
298 did punish us, *invitus*, against his will, but he was willing to heal the wounds which he had made; that men did constrain him to continue or increase his plagues, when he was otherwise ready to take off his punishing hand.

But some in latter years question (and would to God they did but question) whether punitive justice be as direct an effect of God's primary will, or as primarily intended by him, in respect of some men, as the exercise of bounty and mercy toward others. But if this doctrine were positively determined, the calamities which befall most states and kingdoms would be more incurable, and all endeavours of reformation less available, than is behoveful for them to believe they are. Howbeit some passages of sacred writ there be, which either naturally run or have been drawn this way, as if punitive justice were the mark or aim of means offered by God; for so that place in the apostle, Rom. i. 20, *The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, to the intent that they should be without excuse.* But this expression of the original is worthily corrected by the latter English; *God did manifest himself in his works so fair, that they are without excuse.* And though the speech be for its form indifferent or equipendent, yet the matter doth necessarily sway it from the former to this latter sense. For if God had manifested himself unto them

to no other intent but that they might be without excuse, they had a better excuse in readiness than any of the reprobate or damned shall find at the day of judgment. None of them shall be then able to deny either the receipt of a talent, or the receipt of it to some better intent or end, than to leave them without excuse. They are therefore without excuse because they have *hid their talents*, and do not employ them to the use or end intended by their Master. But more particularly the calamities or plagues which befell the Jewish nation may seem incurable from the words of our Saviour, Matt. xxiii. 34, 35: *Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in the synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.* Did the wisdom of God then send prophets and wise men unto their forefathers, or did he come to this generation in person himself, to this intent or end, that all the righteous blood which had been shed upon the earth might be required of them? For thus interpreting this place the original phrase affords a pretence somewhat fairer than can be brought for the former interpretation of St. Paul, *ut super vos veniat:* yet every novice in grammar knows that the preposition *ut*, or Greek ἵνα, doth not always denote the final cause, it ofttimes imports the course or issue, not the end or intent, τὸ πέρας, not τὸ τέλος: so saith our Saviour, John xvii. 3, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent: ut te cognoscant;* this is no more than if he had said, *te cognoscere*, "to know thee to be the only God,

and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, is life eternal." Give these words of our Saviour in the viith of St. John leave to interpret his forecited words, Matt. xxiii, and their meaning will be in plain English thus much, and no more: "Some of them you will crucify, and some of them you will scourge and persecute so long,
299 until the blood of all the righteous shed upon the earth will come upon you." The true reason why the blood of God's prophets was to be required of this generation was, because God had continually sent them unto them from time to time, out of his mercy and compassion, that they might be healed: so saith the scripture, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16: *And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his word, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against his people, until there was no remedy.* That which made their calamities remediless, or, as the original hath it, *incurable*, was their continual *mocking, or despising the messengers of their peace,* which God from time to time had sent to heal them: so that all the calamity which ensued was not the end intended by God in sending his messengers unto them, but the issue of their mocking and despising both physicians and medicines. They were the cause of their incurable wounds, yet was it God that did inflict them: for so it followeth, vv. 17—19: *Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man, maiden, or old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and*

the treasures of the king, and his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of the Lord, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

All this mass of misery fell upon the people of God, for whose prosperity Solomon here prays: all the desolation here mentioned light on this house, which he now consecrates to be the house of prayer. All this, and more, became inevitable in the issue; but so it was not from the time that Jeremy began to prophesy, to foretell and forethreaten it by express revelation from the Lord of heaven. One special means by which this misery became inevitable was that erroneous opinion or conceit wherewith most of this people were possessed, to wit, that their calamity or prosperity was fatal; that all things were so predeterminated by God that nothing could fall out otherwise than it did; that every thing was absolutely necessary in respect of God's decree. This was the symptom of their incurable disease for whose cure Jeremy was sent to the potter's house, there to receive that instruction from the Lord of which we read, chap. xviii. The exact point of time wherein their disease (whether in whole or part) became incurable, we leave with all reverence unto Him who hath reserved the knowledge of times and seasons (as a special prerogative of his power) unto himself, Acts i. 7. Yet thus much he hath revealed unto us, that every part of this calamity did not become inevitable at one and the same time; the state of prince and people became more dangerous than it had been, (as it were a disease recovering strength from a relapse,) by their shuffling with God after they had made a covenant with him for freeing their servants according to the tenor of his law in that

case provided. This breach of covenant Jeremy foretells, in thundering terms, would prove the cause of greater calamity than he before had threatened: *And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every one to his neighbour.*
300 *But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and his handmaid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and handmaids. Therefore saith the Lord; Because ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and to his neighbour: behold, I proclaim a liberty to you, saith the Lord, to the sword, pestilence, and famine; and I will make you to be removed unto all the kingdoms of the earth,* Jerem. xxxiv. 15—17, and vv. 21, 22: *and Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes will I give into the hands of their enemies, and into the hand of them that seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which are gone up from you. Behold, I will command, saith the Lord, and cause them to return to this city; and they shall fight against it, and take it, and burn it with fire: and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without an inhabitant.* Yet was not this sentence, though thus uttered with indignation, as yet altogether unchangeable, much less was this people's safety peremptorily decreed by God, as their false prophets mispersuaded them. This error concerning the tenor of God's decree or covenant being planted in them, the Egyptians' expedition against the Chaldean army, for Jerusalem's succour, might with fair applause be pretended as a means ordained by God for effecting their safety. To quell this their vain confidence in the strength of Egypt, the prophet reavoucheth his former message, with some additions,

Jerem. xxxvii. 7—10: *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; Thus shall ye say to the king of Judah, that sent you unto me to inquire of me; Behold, Pharaoh's army, which is come forth to help you, shall return to Egypt into their own land. And the Chaldeans shall come again, and fight against the city, and take it, and burn it with fire. Thus saith the Lord; Deceive not yourselves, saying, The Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart. For though ye had smitten the whole army of Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire.*

Yet was not the event here foretold at this time altogether inevitable, but inevitable only upon their refusal to obey the prophet's counsel; for after this time the same prophet shews king Zedekiah a way or mean ordained by God, which if he had followed, a great part of this calamity, so peremptorily denounced, might have been avoided, Jerem. xxxviii. 17, 18: *Then said Jeremiah unto Zedekiah, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel; If thou wilt as surely go forth unto the king of Babylon, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thine house: but if thou wilt not go forth to the king of Babylon's princes, then shall this city be given into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hands.* This was the last warning which he was to expect from God, by his prophet, for his peace: but not hearkening unto his voice whilst it was called to-day, but seeking to escape the judgments denounced by flight, he inevitably brought them upon himself, upon his princes, upon the temple, in a greater measure, especially as they concerned himself and his house,

than they had been threatened. When the Chaldean princes entered the city, Zedekiah and the men of war fled out of the city by night, but the Chaldeans' host pursued after them, and overtook Zedekiah in the desert of Jericho, and brought him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babel, unto Riblah, where he slew the sons of
301 Zedekiah before his eyes, and all the nobles of Judah, (a lamentable farewell to the sense of sight and liberty,) for immediately after, he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and put him in chains to carry him to Babylon, Jerem. xxxix. 7. Thus have you heard how Jerusalem and Judah came to a lamentable and tragical end, by diseases in their nature not incurable, but made such by their own wilfulness, in not hearkening to the voice of God's prophets. Did then the wisdom of God, who out of compassion sent his prophets unto them whilst the first temple stood, come in person himself to increase the misery of that generation with whom he conversed here on earth, or to destroy the second temple with a more fearful destruction than had befallen the first? That this generation became a prey, in the issue, to the Roman vultures, was not from want of good will in him to gather them, but from their unwillingness to be gathered under his wings; witness himself, Matt. xxiii. 37, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem,* &c. But did he speak this as God or as man? a captious question. What if I should say that it was *vox humana,* and yet *vox Dei,* "the voice of God uttered by man," the very personal voice of the Son of God, as St. Luke testifies, *He spake as never man spake,* and was so affected towards Jerusalem as never man was affected. The prophet Jeremiah, after he had seen that tragedy really acted which he had represented in words, did wish his head had been a fountain of tears, that he might weep day and night for the slain of his

people. The Wisdom and Son of God became a more sorrowful spectator of a second tragedy of Jerusalem, not as yet within forty years' probability to be acted: *When he came near,* saith St. Luke, xix. 41, 42, *he beheld the city, and wept for it, saying, O, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.* These his tears, though he wept as man, were a visible expression of his divine inexpressible love toward Jerusalem and her inhabitants, after they had deserved this ill at his hands, stiffly bent to deserve much worse. As yet it was called *today,* but this was a critical day, and full of danger; howbeit, Jerusalem's sin was not sealed up until the sign of the prophet Jonas was expired: after his resurrection from the dead, Jerusalem had yet forty days for repentance, as Nineveh had (for so long our Saviour remained here on earth); but Jerusalem's children not repenting within that time, as Nineveh did, their estate became as desperate as their murmuring forefathers' had been in the wilderness; they were to wander forty years in the wilderness before any of them could enter into the land of promise, and as many as were above forty years being cut off by oaths from all hopes or possibilities of entering in at all. This generation, whom our Saviour here forewarns, were to continue in it twenty years; which being expired, they and their children have been exterminated, and banished from it, for almost forty times forty years. During the forty years wherein they were permitted to remain in it, their estate was no less miserable than their forefathers' had been in the wilderness. There died in the wilderness almost six hundred thousand men; of this latter generation well nigh twice as many, within the same compass of time, did die more

miserably; Jerusalem being first made their prison, afterwards their grave; first a heap of carcasses, and then a heap of stones. Now seeing, as our apostle saith, these Jews did not stumble to the end that they should fall, but rather that by their fall salvation might come unto the Gentiles; let us beseech our
302 gracious God, that from Jerusalem's ruin we may in time, and *whilst it is called to-day*, seek the edification of his church and kingdom. Root out, good Lord, we beseech thee, all Jewish affections and Jewish opinions out of the hearts of thy people, that so our prayers and supplications for the prosperity of thine inheritance and thine anointed may be ever acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

THE SECOND SERMON

UPON

2 CHRON. vi. 39, 40.

CONCERNING the second general proposed, two points there be which require discussion or declaration: the first, whether this petition which Solomon here preferreth to the King of kings were granted according to his desires; the second, how far the grant made to him, or how far the practices or experiments answerable to his petition, during the time that this temple stood, may concern us, or the times wherein we live. That Solomon's petition was fully granted, first the equity of the matter contained in it may persuade us; for he requests nothing at God's hands which is for substance altogether new; nothing but that which out of his free mercy and bounty he had granted unto his people before, though not supplicated unto in such a solemn manner as Solomon now useth, and prescribes as a pattern for others to use. When Israel was in his infancy, not able to speak the language of Canaan, much less to frame his petitions according to the style and form of the sanctuary, the God of his father did understand his cry, and was always ready to give him a better answer than he could desire. *The cry of the children of Israel* (saith God) *is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them,* Exod. iii. 9. Might they have spoken for themselves, the utmost of their request had

been only for some ease or mitigation of their present servitude and grievance; but God (so gracious is he) sends them full deliverance, and of slaves makes them a free state, a royal nation. Upon the sight of Pharaoh's host pursuing them, after they had been set free, the extremity of fear makes them desirous rather to return unto their wonted thraldom, than to hazard their lives for attaining that liberty whereunto God by Moses had called them. Whilst thus affected, they cry unto the Lord, and he hears their cry, although it were mingled with murmurings against Moses, Exod. xiv. 10, 11. True it is, that Moses prayed whilst they murmured; but God was more ready to hear than Moses to pray; and therefore he saith, ver. 15, *Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.* But for a master to redeem his own servants from foreign oppression is not so strange, or out of course. Did God then, at the prayer or instance of his servant, heal his people whom
304 he himself had wounded? *When the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt amongst them, and consumed them that were in the utmost parts of the camp,* Numb. xi. 1. The disease was acute, and made quick dispatch; the medicine was as swift and speedy: then *the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched,* ver. 2. One branch of Solomon's petition is, that when *Israel should go forth to battle against their enemies by the way which he should send them, that he would then hear their prayers and supplications, and judge their cause.* A lively pledge of God's favour, answerable to this branch of the petition, and of the immediate dependance which success in battle hath on faithful prayers, we have in

that story, Exod. xvii. 11, when Joshua was sent by Moses' appointment to fight with Amalek: *It came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.* Another branch of Solomon's petition in this place is, ver. 24, *That when Israel should be put to the worst before their enemies, that God would be merciful unto their sin; when they should turn again and confess his name and pray.* This was Israel's case in the siege of Ai, Joshua vii. 6, 8: Joshua, upon the sight of this wound, flies for succour to that medicine which Solomon haply from his practice prescribes; for he *rent his clothes, and fell on his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord, and cried, Alas! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before their enemies!* God hears his prayer, before he was willing to make an end of praying; *Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?* and instructs him for restoring Israel to his wonted estate and condition, by recompensing the way of the wicked upon his own head. First, he makes Achan confess his sin, and give glory unto God, and so removes the sin from Israel by execution of justice; which in like case is equivalent to prayer, at least a necessary condition of successful prayers for the public weal and safety of kingdoms.

2. If after Joshua's death we were to give a general title to the sacred history of ensuing times, for almost four hundred years, or make an epitome of the book of Judges, it could not be more brief than this: 'Israel sins, and is given up into the hands of the oppressor; Israel cries unto the Lord, and he sends him a judge and a deliverer.' And yet, as the sacred penman of that story observes, Israel's repentance always died with the judge which God did send them, and could

not be revived again but by renewing of affliction. One and the same affliction was commonly the effect of Israel's sin, and the means of Israel's repentance; his sin was the efficient, and repentance the final cause of their oppression: and so gracious was God towards them, so ready always to hear their prayers, that he seemed not to punish them so much for sins past, as to continue his punishment until they repented. Among other calamities of estate whose cure or remedy Solomon here seeks, the plague of pestilence is one, ver. 28: with this the land was grievously smitten, even from Dan to Beersheba, in his father David's days, by the immediate hand of God; and in particular for his father's sin in numbering the people. Yet when David confessed his sin, and thus prayed, *Behold, I have sinned, yea, I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house,* 2 Sam. xxiv. 17; the Lord was appeased towards the land, and the plague ceased from Israel.
305 So ready was God always to hear the prayers of this people, when they turned unto him, before this temple was built.

The sum, then, of Solomon's petition is, that the Lord would be pleased to give his people some particular or new assurance, for continuing his wonted mercies or blessings unto them; and that this house which he had built might be as a public court of audience, a place wherein it might be free for every man, and for all Israel, to exhibit the petitions of his heart to his God, and to receive answer from him. And so we may observe, that from this time forward the consecration of this house, and the solemnity which Solomon here used, did come into the style and form of this people's prayers; made as it were an additional

to the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But what express proof have we, that Solomon's own prayers at this time, for these prerogatives of this house, were heard? This fully appears from the subsequent miracle, wherewith this petition was signed, as with the immediate hand of God, 2 Chron. vii. 1, 2: *Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the house.* This kind of answer by fire was always most satisfactory to the business or proceedings that were, or might be, in question; by this answer God did determine the controversies between Elias and Baal's priests; by the like effect of fire from heaven, (consuming the fat of the sacrifice,) the calling of Aaron to the priesthood by God's immediate appointment, not by man, was put out of question. And so was the consecration of the Son of God to his everlasting priesthood confirmed by the visible apparition of the Holy Ghost in tongues of fire, which was the accomplishment of both the former miraculous apparitions from heaven; the one at the consecration of Aaron, the other at the consecration of this material temple.

3. But admitting every branch of Solomon's petition was on God's part fully granted; yet will it be demanded, whether the practice did pursue the grant, or what remarkable success or issue the practice found? To both parts of this demand, two or three instances, which are upon sacred record, will suffice. The first from the practice of good Jehoshaphat, in that strange exigence or extremity of danger, whereunto the kingdom of Judah was brought in his days by the mali-

cious confederacy of Moab, Ammon, and mount Seir. As was the danger, so was this good king's fear, exceeding great; and the greater it was, the better motive he had to pray more heartily, according to that pattern which Solomon prescribes, 2 Chron. xx. 5, &c. *And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? and they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, that thou wilt hear and help,* &c. As the form of
306 his prayer was peculiar, such as was not used before this house was built, so the success was extraordinary, and such as this people had never tasted before, unless it were in the destruction of Pharaoh and his mighty army. The victory which Gideon had over the Midianites was miraculous, in respect of their multitude which was vanquished, and of their paucity which vanquished them; yet in that miraculous deliverance there was the sword of the Lord and the sword of Gideon. They fought for victory, but in this mighty discomfiture of three nations more potent than Midian, which had combined for the overthrow of Judah, there was only the arm of the Lord; the use of man's sword or arm of flesh is utterly prohibited by the prophet

Jahaziel, ver. 17: *Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you.* All that Jehoshaphat's royal presence or person did undertake or perform, for the accomplishment of this victory promised, was to exhort his people, not to be valiant in fight, but to put their confidence in the Lord of hosts, ver. 20: *They rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* And so they did; for this victory was more complete, and more beneficial to the king and people, than any victory which David had gotten over the enemies of God, though purchased with his people's blood: for, as it is, ver. 25, *when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found amongst them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much:* for the Lord, mighty in battle, had turned the strength and weapons of death and war, which these confederates had prepared against Judah, upon themselves. The most remarkable circumstance in this sacred story was, that the coals and fire of that fatal dissension which brought universal destruction upon these three armies did then begin to kindle, when the men of Judah and Jerusalem began to praise the Lord with sweet harmony, as well of heart and spirit, as of voice, vv. 22, 23: *When they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir,*

which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to destroy and slay them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of mount Seir, every one helped to destroy another. Such power there is in the songs of the sanctuary, when they are rightly set by the priest, and taken up by unanimous consent of prince and people, united in heart, with the fear of God, and with loving affection one towards another, and towards God's church. Here was more than an accomplishment of that branch of Solomon's petition in this chapter, ver. 34: they went out indeed unto their enemies, and by the way which God had appointed them; but the way which he had now appointed them was not to fight with them, but to believe in him, who can save us as well with a few as with many, and can maintain the cause of his people as well without the industry or endeavours of man, as with them. And for this cause Jehoshaphat and his people did praise him with like confidence, for the assurance which he had given them, by his prophet, of future victory, as if it had been already gotten.

A victory, or defeat of the enemy, without the active
307 endeavours of men, fully parallel to this, we have in 2 Kings xix. 15; to wit, the great discomfiture of Sennacherib's army, which had for a long time besieged Jerusalem. Such was the success of Hezekiah's prayers, which were conceived in that form which Solomon here prescribes, and uttered in this house which he now consecrates: *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord,*

bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord, thine eyes, and see: and hear the word of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to reproach the living God, vv. 15, 16. To this petition he receives this answer, vv. 32—34: *Thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord. For I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.* The like joyful deliverance was obtained by the prayers of Elisha in that strait siege of Samaria; and the famine wherewith the city was so grievously pinched was suddenly turned into such plenty, that whereas an ass's head had been sold one day for forty pieces of silver, the morrow after, two measures of barley and a measure of wheat flour was sold for a shekel, 2 Kings vi. 25. and vii. 18. Heaven, we read, was shut up for three years in Elias's time, the earth was chapped, and the land of Israel wounded with famine for want of rain. Heaven is opened again by Elias's prayer, and the land refreshed, 1 Kings xvii. 1. xviii. 45. So that there is not one branch of Solomon's petition which the Lord did not really accomplish when this people prayed unto him as Solomon prescribes them.

Through want of such prayers as Solomon here makes, or at least for want of that faith by which the prayers of Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and the prophets, were conceived, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, &c. found no such success or deliverance in their distress as these two godly princes had done.

But some men, the better they believe these sacred

stories concerning the infallible success of the kings of Judah's godly prayers, the more prone they will be to question in what cases, how far, or whether at all, the undoubted grant of Solomon's petition may any way concern us, or the times wherein we live.

The question may seem more pertinent, or rather the second general point proposed by us may seem more questionable, or (more than questionable) altogether impertinent, because most of these victories or deliverances which Judah or Israel obtained by prayers were miraculous; such as far exceed the force of natural causes, or means ordinary, and which are without the reach or contrivance of policy. And what assurance then can we have that our prayers shall be answered with like success, unless we may believe or hope that even our prayers or supplications may procure true miracles? But miracles have altogether or for the most part ceased for these later times; in which, for this reason, that song of the psalmist might be more fitly taken up than the practice of Solomon or the kings of Judah; "We have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works which thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them."

Thus to complain of the times wherein we live, in
308 respect of former, all of us are by nature too prone; and this proneness is one special means by which the fervency of better spirits' devotion is so much dampened: yet Solomon hath told us that we are but foolish inquisitors; and if but foolish inquisitors, then certainly no competent judges in this case.

To say that these times are not more corrupt than former, were to flatter them, enough to convince us of being timeservers: yet to complain of them, or to

lament them, as men do which have no hope or assurance in God's promises, were to accuse God; a spice of infidelity. Certainly there is no fault in the times or in the places wherein we live, but such as we ourselves respectively infuse into them, some by wickedness of life, others by impious or ungodly opinions.

Let us then so use our freedom, in speaking the truth of the times wherein we live, that we do not slander the eternal Dispenser of times and seasons; that we cast no aspersions upon his fatherly care and providence. God hath not forgotten to be as good and gracious unto our times, as he hath been unto former ages, but we have forgotten to be thankful unto him; we either are distrustful of ourselves, or for the most part teach others to distrust the extent of his goodness, whose certain belief must be the root of prayers as well for blessings spiritual as temporal.

There is no speedier way or shorter cut unto God's curse or vengeance, than by distrusting his goodness towards ourselves, or by denying the fruits of it unto others.

But to the query proposed, how far the grant of Solomon's petition may concern ourselves, or the times wherein we live, the answer is ready; Our present interest in that grant, our assurance in God's promises for blessings temporal to that people may be as great, our deliverance from dangers imminent, and unavoidable to the apprehension of man, may be as certain and infallible as theirs was, albeit God doth not in particular promise succour or work our safety by the same and like means as he did theirs.

Admit then it were an article of our creed (as it is not), that miracles in these later times have ceased, may not upon any exigence be expected; that to seek

after such signs and wonders as were given then, were a tempting of God, as in truth it is no better; yet all this ought not to weaken our assurance, that the issue of our prayers (so they be as faithful as theirs were) shall be as joyful to ourselves, as beneficial to the state and kingdom, as Jehoshaphat's and Hezekiah's prayers were. God's goodness towards us, his providence over us, is still the same; and our belief of this his goodness, if in us it be true and sound, it is the same it was in them, so will the issue be the same, either in kind or by equivalency. Whether the like issue or success be wrought by means ordinary or extraordinary, is merely accidental to the certainty of it; not to embrace the works of his wisdom with as thankful hearts as Israel did the works of his power, would be childish and pettish.

Hopes of success, whether by means ordinary or miraculous, must in all ages be grounded upon the same article of faith, but not at all times upon the same branch of the same article. It is he that made us which only can preserve us; and while we profess that it is he that made us, and not we ourselves, that he is the maker of all things visible and invisible, we
309 include as much as the apostle saith, and somewhat more than he expresseth in these words, *In him we live, move, and have our being*, which contain the three special branches of God's power.

Miracles, properly so called, consist in some extraordinary manifestation of God's power, either adding somewhat unto or subtracting somewhat from the ordinary efficacy of instrumental causes, or observable course of nature: all miracles may be reduced to such manifestation either of God's creative, or his conservative, or cooperative power.

Samson's strength or achievements were truly mira-

culous, and did suppose an addition of force supernatural to his native activity, or extraordinary measure of God's coworking power.

The victory which Joshua got over the Amorites was after this manner miraculous. There was a power more than natural, as well in the motion as in the making of those great stones wherewith the Amorites were beaten down. The three children again were preserved untouched in the midst of the flaming furnace, by true miracle, or extraordinary manifestation of God's power; but this consisted not in the addition of any supernatural forces unto it, but in the mere subtraction of God's coworking power, without subtraction of his creative or conserving power; for so it had ceased, not only to burn, but to be fire. The sudden withering of Jeroboam's hand was a true miracle, but did consist in the subtraction of God's preserving power, that is, that branch of his power, in which, as the apostle speaks, all things live that are endowed with life.

That God hath thus wrought the safety of his servants, and yet is able to work by these or the like more miraculous means, we do believe, in that we believe he is the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. But besides that absolute dependance which every particular creature hath on these branches of his power, by which their several efficacies may be extraordinarily increased or diminished, there is an essential subordination of all the several ranks of his creatures, with whatsoever strength or efficacy they be endowed, unto his providence; as in wisdom he made them all, so in wisdom he marshalleth and ordereth them all.

Now the contrivance of means or agents, for their nature or kind but ordinary, may be more admirable

than miracles properly so called, that is, than his particular works of wonder.

Miracles are in their nature more apt to affect the sense, but the sweet contrivances of God's wisdom and providence do more affect the understanding; the one works astonishment, the other admiration: for this reason were miracles more frequent in the infancy of the church, as an awful kind of discipline, to enforce unbelievers to give audience unto the word of life, and to take God's promises (which would otherwise be slighted) into serious consideration.

But the ways of God's wisdom, or sweet disposition of his providence, are more apt to cherish the seed of life, being sown in men's hearts. Miracles by continual frequency would cease to be miracles, would not be wondered at; whereas the unsearchable ways of God's wisdom, or his indissolvable contrivances of extraordinary success by means ordinary, will uncessantly breed in us matter of admiration. His ways and contrivances are still in one kind or other most admirable, but we want eyes or will to contemplate or observe them: yet let us see whether the greatest deliverances
310 which God wrought for his children of Israel, besides that one in bringing them out of the land of Egypt, were not wrought by means ordinary and usual, if we respect their particular or several agencies, and admirable and extraordinary only for their combination and contrivance. *When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongues with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. Yea the Lord hath done great things for us already, whereof we rejoice.* Ps. cxxvi. 1—3. This was indeed a great deliverance, and so to be acknowledged by all posterity.

For so the prophet had foretold, Jer. xxiii. 7: ***Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that they shall no more say, The Lord liveth, which brought forth the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.***

Not to make comparison betwixt the mighty works of God, or not to question whether, according to the literal meaning of this prophecy, the fame or fresh memory of this second deliverance out of Chaldea should eclipse the fame of the former out of Egypt; this is certain and unquestionable, that this latter deliverance was a most exact parallel to the former: and yet, if we could exactly calculate all the particular means which did concur to the surprisal of Babylon by Cyrus, or to Cyrus's setting this people free, we should not find one miraculous effect among them; and yet, if we would but seriously compare all the circumstances and concurrences of second causes, which Herodotus and Xenophon relate, with the sacred predictions concerning Cyrus's good success against Babylon, the entire contrivance of them is most admirable, and such as would give us a more pleasant view or model of God's infinite wisdom, than miracles can do of his infinite power.

Again, in that deliverance of the Jews from Haman's conspiracy there is no extraordinary manifestation of God's power, no particular cause or agent was in its working advanced above the ordinary pitch of nature; and yet the contrivance or suiting of these ordinary agents appointed by God is more admirable, than if the same end had been effected by means truly miraculous. For a king not to take kindly rest by

night, though in a bed of ease; is not unusual. For a king, again, to seek to solace his waking thoughts by hearing the annals of his kingdom or the journals of his own reign read unto him, is more commendable than rare; but that king Ahasuerus should lie awake at that time specially when Haman did watch and plot the destruction of the Jews, that causing the chronicles of his kingdom to be read the reader should light on the place wherein Mordecai's unrewarded good service in discovering the treason intended against the king's person was recorded; this was from the Keeper of Israel, who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth, and who was marvellous in his people's sight.

It was his doing likewise, that Esther, though by Mordecai's advice, should conceal her nation and parentage until she came in such high favour with the king that queen Vashti should be displaced and she preferred, about the same time wherein Haman was advanced, and by his advancement enabled to do a remediless mischief to the Jewish nation, had not the Lord (as the wise man speaks) made one thing against another.

311 If we would rightly survey that rare deliverance of Jehoshaphat and his people beforementioned, the particular means by which it was wrought were but ordinary, not miraculous: but the coincidence or concurrence of such means was more than miraculous. Seeing the Spirit of God hath concealed the particular occasions of that unexpected hostility between the children of Ammon and Moab and the Edomites, we have no reason to suspect them to have been any other than such as the Lord heretofore hath wrought, and yet may work, between the confederate enemies of this kingdom's peace, for our good, if we shall be thankful; or between our friends or confederates, for

the advantage of the enemy, if we shall continue enemies unto our God. In a word, in that rare and admirable deliverance there was no particular care or unusual in respect of those times, unless it were Jehoshaphat's and his nobles' firm reliance, not upon the arm of flesh, or probable appearance of means ordinary, but upon the mercy and lovingkindness of the Lord, in whose wisdom they knew was treasured up variety of means ordinary, unknown to them, as all-sufficient to save, as if the whole armoury of his power, by working miracles, had been used for their defence.

If Christian states would throughly parallel Jehoshaphat and Judah in this, God in this age would parallel the success by the like extraordinary disposition of means ordinary. As his mercy endureth for ever, so the treasure of his wisdom, for effecting their good which love him, is inexhaustible. It is not necessary that he should interpose his creative power, or work miracles, for bringing forth success extraordinary and miraculous; for of means ordinary, whereof he hath infinite store, already created, a small number, by his all-seeing disposition, may suffice for any purpose: he can without miracles save with a few, as well as with many.

The letters or elements of all speech or language are not many, few more in number than the years of our youth or nonage; yet the possible compositions of these few are so various and copious, as to afford several words, sufficient, not only to signify the diversity of things that are by name, but to express their natures and properties, enough to decipher all the actions or undertakings of men throughout all ages.

How unsearchable then are his ways! how incomprehensible the secret courses by which he brings

calamity or prosperity upon any nation; who can with greater facility compose the several ranks of his creatures, even all things that are, than the printer can do his few letters!

And albeit all the visible means which may be thought to conspire for our woe or for our weal, may be to man's apprehension apparently the same which have been manifested in former times, yet his wisdom, by secret addition or subtraction of some petty occurrences, may quite alter the success which from some former models we fear or hope, with less ado than a critic, permitted to correct a press, can do the sense and meaning of the exactest writer, by the dispunction or inversion of points or letters. How many devices soever there be in man's heart, yet, as (Prov. xix. 21.) Solomon saith, *there is a counsel of the Lord, and that must stand.*

It was a grave Christian-like advice which the heathen Cambyses, from some broken apprehensions of the great wisdom of his gods, or divine powers, did
312 give unto Cyrus his son, when he first undertook that quarrel with the Armenians which gave occasion to that great war, which, by the counsel of the Lord, he happily accomplished against Babylon. The sum of his advice was this, "That he should run no hazard, either of his own person or of his charge, without sacrificing to the gods, and receiving directions from them. For men," saith he, "in the choice of their actions or undertakings do but rove by guess, not acquainted with the fountains whence true goodness must be derived, or the secret issues by which it runs."

Many instances he there brings of men which had wit or power to compass the particulars which they

most affected, which yet have strangely miscarried in the main chance, and, as it were, ran counter from that end or mark at which all men by nature make aim.

The resultance of his many instances, or his experiments to this purpose, is, "That human wisdom (at the best) hath no more skill to choose what is best for itself, than as if a man should come to a lottery, where he must be content with the lot which he draws; he hath a freedom of will or power to choose this before that, but none to make the prize of what he chooseth; that was set before. But as for the immortal gods, they know all things, as well past as to come, and will direct their friends, being consulted, to choose that which is good, and decline evil. But as for such as are not their friends, there is no necessity that they should take the like care for them."

We may add, though all men by nature be enemies unto the true and only God, yet is there no necessity laid upon any so to continue. All the nations of the earth have better means of reconciliation unto God, than the temple of Hierusalem, or the service of it, was unto the nation of the Jews, wherein it stood: *God*, saith the apostle, *was in Christ, reconciling*, not this or that man, but *the world unto himself*. All the nations of the earth, as you heard before, had their interest in the temple built by Solomon; the demolishing of it, or the second temple built by Zerubbabel, reedified and adorned by Herod, can be no prejudice to any particular nation of the earth, much less to any Christian nation, least of all to this most orthodoxal nation.

But what? Is that way or means of reconciliation unto God which we now have more excellent than the Jewish nation had, whilst Solomon's temple stood? Certainly the Son of God did use no sophism or equi-

vocation; he spake more than metaphors, even sacred mysteries, when he said unto the Jews, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, John ii. 19. For albeit his words, as the evangelist instructs us, were literally meant of the temple of his body, and though the Jews did perniciously err in not construing them so, yet the same words had a further emblematical, mystical, or spiritual sense, importing thus much, that the Jews, by destroying the temple of his body, should destroy that very temple wherein they trusted, and that within three days it should be raised with him to a more excellent state or manner of being than it had.

The material temple was signed or marked unto destruction by the rending of the veil at the hour of his death; and though the visible building, or so much of it as was the work of man's hands, did stand for forty years after, yet it stood but as a carcass, the soul and spirit of it was translated unto the temple of his body. For as he said, *Veios habitante Camillo illic Roma fuit:* "Rome was at Veii whilst Camillus," in whom the life and spirit of the ancient Romans did then
313 wholly reside, "had his residence in that town;" or as we say, "The king's royal presence makes the court;" so was it always the immediate or peculiar presence of God, by way of inhabitation, which made that goodly edifice which Solomon now erected, to be the temple or sanctuary, the house of prayer.

Now from the time of our Saviour's death God withdrew his extraordinary presence from the temple made with hands; all the privileges wherewith it was endowed, and the secret influence of his grace, are now wholly treasured up in the Sun of righteousness, or in the body of Christ, in whom, as the apostle speaks, *the Godhead dwelleth bodily*. God is not so present in

any other body or place as he was in the temple of Jerusalem, not present any where by way of inhabitation save only in the body of Christ and in the members of it, that is, his church.

But inasmuch as God is by such special manner present in Christ's manhood, our access unto him in all our troubles and distress is more immediate than Solomon or his people had any. They were to pray in the material temple, or towards it; their prayers had no other access to heaven than as it were by way of echo from the earthly temple; and though by this way they found a true access unto heaven, yet had they not altogether the same acceptance there as ours now have, or might have.

Solomon indeed beseeched God here in my text, that his eyes might be open, and his ears attent unto the prayers which were made in this place, to wit, in the house which he had built: but this he spake, ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, *after the manner of men:* for God had not then the eyes of men, to look upon men, nor the ears of man, as now he hath, to entertain the prayers of men.

This is our special comfort, that the Son of God, that very Lord unto whom Solomon directs his prayer, is become our High Priest, *not such an High Priest as cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin:* he hath his temple or sanctuary *at the right hand of his Father*, Acts iii. 26, where he sits to pray for us, as Solomon did for his people in his name.

Yea, but he is placed there, as the apostle speaks, *to bless us with all spiritual blessings;* and what are these to blessings of states and kingdoms, for

which Solomon here prays? Much every way, or rather, all in all. For if blessings spiritual include godliness in them, they have blessings temporal annexed unto them as appurtenances: *Godliness*, saith the apostle, *is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

A SERMON

ON

JEREMIAH XXVI. 19.

Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?

THE text is part of an apology for the prophet Jeremiah, against whom the priests and prophets and all the people had pronounced this peremptory sentence, vv. 8, 9, *Thou shalt surely die. Why hast thou prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant?* But this sentence you shall find reversed or contradicted by the princes and all the people, ver. 16: *Then said the princes and all the people unto the priests and prophets; This man is not worthy to die: for he hath spoken unto us in the name of the Lord our God.* The scales of justice being thus far turned the right way, the elders and sages of the land sought to keep them at the point whereto they were drawn, (more through vehemency of present motion than by permanent weight of reason,) by alleging a former rule beyond exception. All that the priests and prophets could pretend, why Jerusalem, having made herself equal to Shiloh in sin, might not be made equal to her in punishment, was this: that albeit Shiloh had been the place of God's rest, the town or city where the ark of his covenant

did reside, yet it never had the title or privilege of the place which God had chosen to place his name in. This was Jerusalem's prerogative amongst all the cities of Israel. But what prerogative soever Jerusalem did from this title enjoy, these had been the same in the days of Hezekiah which now they were: and if in the judgment of Hezekiah and the state of Judah it were lawful for Micah to threaten that *Zion should be ploughed as a field, that Jerusalem should become heaps, and the mountain of the house like the high places of the forest*, it could be no capital crime in Jeremiah to say, that the Lord would make the temple like Shiloh, and Jerusalem a curse to all the nations of the earth. Now Hezekiah and the state of Judah, as these elders allege, were so far from putting
318 Micah to death, that Hezekiah, for his part, *did fear the Lord, and besought the Lord*; and when it is said *he feared the Lord*, it is included that he did not only patiently hear the prophet, but truly believe him: for *the fear of the Lord* in this place is neither to be extended further nor contracted narrower than thus; he feared lest the Lord should put the judgments denounced by Micah in speedy execution, and, as is probable, by Sennacherib king of Assyria. By what means soever the likelihood was that this judgment should be put in execution, the only means which Hezekiah resolveth upon for avoiding or preventing it was hearty and unfeigned prayers: *Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord*, &c. In this his resolution and success these four particulars present themselves to your considerations:

First, His wisdom in making choice of prayer, before and above all other means which the opportunity of those times might suggest.

Secondly, What advantageous success did accrue from

fear unto the efficacy of his prayers; or, how fear of God's judgments doth prepare men's hearts to pray.

Thirdly, Of the just occasion of his and his people's fear; or of others' fear in like case.

Fourthly, In what sense God is said to repent.

If I should say, that Hezekiah in thus doing did shew himself a godly and religious king, none would deny it; but to say he was in this a wise and politic king, this will not be granted. For what policy was there in fearing and praying? every coward is capable of the former, and he is a very fool that, when other means fail, cannot practise the latter. Must we then decline all trial of his wisdom by the received rule of human policy? This we might do, but this we need not do: for the depth of his wisdom and policy will appear, if we measure it by that rule, or scale of that policy, which the wise men of this world hold in greatest admiration. For so a great master of the art of policy tells us, that when any state or kingdom is either weakened by means internal, as by the sloth, the negligence, or carelessness of the governors, (as diseases grow in men's bodies by degrees insensible, for want of exercise or good diet,) or whether they be wounded by causes external, the only method for recovering their former strength and dignity is, *ut omnia ad sua principia revocentur*, "by giving life unto the fundamental laws and ancient customs." As for new inventions, what depth or subtilties soever they carry, unless they suit well with the fundamental laws or customs of the state wherein they practise, they prove in the issue but like empirical physic which agrees not with the natural disposition or customary diet of the party to whom it is ministered. Of the former aphorism you have many *probatums* in the ancient Roman state; so have ye of the latter in the

state of Italy, about the time wherein Machiavel wrote, if we may believe him in his own profession. Admit then the rule or method were (as, for aught I have to say, it is) without exception, yet the success of the practice (how conformable soever to the rule) must still depend on that measure of goodness which is contained in the fundamental laws or primeval customs of every nation: if these be but comparatively good, the success of the practice cannot be absolute; if they be but seemingly good, or mixed with evil, the great philosopher, treating of this subject, hath foretold the success; *ἀνάγκη πότε χρόνῳ ἐκ τῶν ψευδῶς ἀγαθῶν ἀληθὲς ἐκβῆναι κακόν*, "Whatsoever is either falsely or but
319 seemingly good, will in revolution of time bring forth effects truly and really evil." If the fundamental laws of any state be not firm or sound, whatsoever else is laid upon them, there lies a necessity of sinking with their own weight. Where the basis is but narrow, the *fastigium*, or roof, cannot be high; or where the foundation is both firm and spacious, yet if the structure be set awry, with every degree of height it gets there grows a parallel degree of inclination to its sudden downfall. Now if Hezekiah, in making choice of prayer before any other means of policy, did practise according to the former rule, that is, as the ancient laws of that kingdom and rules of government prescribed by his ancestors did direct him, he was more politicly wise than any prince of other nations in these times could be; than any at this day can be, besides such as have the like fundamental laws, or take his practice in like exigence for their pattern. For the fundamental laws of his kingdom were absolutely good, as being immediately given by God himself; the best laws of other nations were but the inventions of men. Hence says the psalmist, Psalm

cxlvii. 19, *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel.* Yet Moses presumed that other nations, which had no knowledge of their laws in particular, should, from the happy success which was to attend their due observance, acknowledge in general that their laws were more righteous, and able to make this people wiser, than other nations could be. For so Moses had said, Deut. iv. 5, 6, 8: *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me: keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?*

Amongst other nations, some had laws in their kind good for war, others for peace; few, or none, good laws for both; none absolutely good for either: no such laws as their strict observance might secure them from their enemies. They could not be so wise in projecting their own future prosperity, but their enemies might be as subtle in contriving their adversity: they could not be so strong in battle, but their enemies and their allies might be as strong as they: they could not be so industrious or vigilant for recovering the strength or dignity of their weakened estate, but their enemies might be as vigilant to defeat their intentions: or albeit one nation had so far overtopped another, as well in council of peace as strength of war, as to be able to keep them perpetually under; yet no laws, no inventions of men, could ever secure the most potent nation on earth from such dangers as accrue from the host of inanimate or reasonless creatures,

albeit all neighbour nations were at peace with them, or sworn confederates for advancing their state and dignity. Against the hosts or armies of men, some preparations may always be made, because they come not without notice or preparation; but the several hosts of the reasonless creatures come upon men, for the most part, without observation or foresight; and one of them can execute another's office or charge, or every one accomplish that work which the armies of men did intend, but could not execute.

That scarcity of bread, or other calamity, which sometime suddenly ariseth in some limb or corner of a kingdom, by want of trade, or by shutting up too
320 great a multitude of ships for a long time in one harbour, whilst the enemy or pirates annoy the coasts; how easily might it be much increased, if He that keeps the winds as in a treasure house should shut up a greater multitude of ships for a long time in the same harbour by a contrary wind, albeit their enemies in the meanwhile become their friends, albeit they were provided of an invincible navy at an hour's warning! Or in case they did know whence the wind cometh, or whither it is going, or could so covenant that it should blow where and when they listed; yet if the Lord of hosts be so pleased, he can bring a greater dearth and scarcity upon the most fertile provinces of the land than either the enemy or contrary winds can occasion, either by withdrawing the sweet influence of the heavens, or by corrupting the seed lately sown, or corn ready to be reaped, with abundant moisture: or, admit any people or nation, by miracle or divine dispensation, might have authority, not over the winds only, but over the clouds, the rain, and dew; or such a power of shutting and opening heaven as husbandmen have of letting in brooks upon their

meadows, and taking them off again at their pleasures, so as they might have seedtime and harvest as seasonable, their fields as fruitful, the sea as open as their hearts could desire; yet the very freedom of commerce and traffick (whether with foreign nations or with other members of the same nation,) may bring in a greater inconvenience, which no plenty can hold out, than the enemy, than unseasonable wind or weather could threaten. Want of trade and want of victuals are plagues or punishments sent by God; but the plague of pestilence, which is ofttimes the companion of peace and plenty, the usual effect of free trading or traffick, is more terrible than either of the former wants. And thus may every part of the reasonless host accomplish what another had omitted. Now with turbulent spirits, or unruly men, good laws duly executed may take some order; but against unseasonable weather, against unruly or incommodious winds, no law of man, no act of parliament, can provide. Against the plague or pestilence, no council of state or war, no host or army, can secure themselves, much less others. Though they that besiege and are besieged do keep watch and sentinel day and night, yet the arrows of this dreadful messenger fly more certainly to the mark whereto they are directed, though at midnight, than their bullets do at midday.

As there is no counsel against the Lord, so there is no policy that can prevent the execution of God's judgments upon mightiest kingdoms by the meanest of his creatures, besides that policy which his laws given to Israel did prescribe. One special branch of that wisdom which Moses ascribes unto these laws was, they taught their observers not to trust in bow or shield, not to put any part of their confidence in the strength or wit of man; no, not in their own observa-

tion of these very laws, or reformation wrought by their rules, as it was theirs, but only in the Lord of hosts. He was their wisdom, and he was their strength, whensoever any danger did approach, whether from men or from other creatures; their laws did teach them, that he was absolute Lord over all; that the hearts of kings and governors were under his governance; that he could dispose and turn them as it seemed best to his heavenly wisdom, and that always seems best to him which is for the good of such as repose their whole trust and confidence in him. When Israel's enemies displeased him more than Israel did, he made them stronger than their enemies; and when their
321 ways did please him, he made their enemies, as Solomon speaks, *to be at peace with them.* Whilst they faithfully served this Lord of hosts, they knew he could command the whole host of the reasonless or lifeless creatures to do them service.

From this knowledge of God and his laws did Solomon gather these unerring rules of sacred policy, whose observation at this time did, and might for ever have preserved this kingdom. There is no inconvenience of peace, no mischief of war, no kind of calamity which can befall any state or kingdom, against which the fundamental laws of this nation, and the rules of policy gathered from them by Solomon, did not sufficiently provide. The sovereign remedies for every particular disease or kind of calamity are set down at large, 2 Chron. vi. 22—40. The remedy against the calamity of war, vv. 24, 25; against the calamity that may come by drought, vv. 26, 27; against famine, pestilence, and blasting of corn, or other inconvenience from the host of reasonless creatures, you have the remedy, vv. 28—30; against captivity in a foreign land, vv. 37, 38. The sovereign remedy against all

these and other like inconveniences and calamities is for substance one and the same with that which good king Hezekiah here used, *to fear the Lord, and pray unto the Lord*, either in the temple when they had opportunity to resort unto it, or towards the temple or the place wherein it stood, when they sojourned or were detained captives in a foreign land: and whoso would diligently peruse the sacred story, from Solomon's time until this people's return from captivity, and the building up of the second temple, shall find a *probatum* of this catholic and sovereign medicine, in respect of every branch of calamity mentioned by Solomon at the consecration of the first temple—I must hold to the instance of my text. Another branch of that which was contained in the fundamental laws of this kingdom, and which goes a great deal deeper than the fundamental rules of any other policy, was this; that of all calamities which did or could befall them, their sins and transgressions were the prime causes; and whatsoever afflictions were laid upon them for their sins could not be taken off without the humble supplication of the sinners. Unto a lower ebb than king Ahaz did leave it at, the kingdom of Judah had not been brought by any of his predecessors, or by any other in their days. Now of all the miseries which at any time befell it by the famine, by the enemy's sword, or by the pestilence, the only cause which the rule of faith assigns was their forsaking of the Lord their God, and the transgressing of his laws. But to prevent the perpetuity and continuance of such calamities as king Ahaz and his adherents had by their foul transgressions involved this kingdom in, no attempt or practice of prince or people, whether jointly or severally, did ever find success, until they put Solomon's rules of sacred policy in practice, as good king Heze-

kiah did; *Did he not fear the Lord, and prayed before the Lord*, &c. The fruits of his prayer, and the reformation of those corrupt times, by giving life unto their fundamental laws, were two: first, his prayers procured an healing of the wounds which by negligence of his predecessors had been given to the state; secondly, he prevented the execution of those terrible judgments which in his own days did hang over this land and people, specially over their heads and rulers. The kingdom of David had sometimes 322 exceeded the most flourishing neighbour kingdoms, as far as the cedars of Libanus did the ordinary trees of the forest, but was now brought low. That height which was left her was but as a decayed tree marked to the fall; Hezekiah by zealous prayers, removes the axe from the root, after it had made such deep incision that it was scarce able to bear its stem, though despoiled of his top or principal branches; it nearly concerned every one which hoped for shelter under its shade to pray for gentle winds and comfortable weather, that she might recover root and branch again. But so Hezekiah's and his people's successors did not. Manasses his son found a people not untoward, as being in some tolerable sort reformed by Hezekiah; but he himself a most untoward king, able (by his authority and bad example) to undo what his good father had well done; to spoil and mar a greater people than he was lord of, though better reformed in Josiah, grandchild to this Manasses, as good a king as could be wished for; a man that needed no reformation, a fit pattern for reforming others. But this heavenly star was placed in an earthly sphere; he had to deal with such a lewd court and naughty people, as choked the influence of his goodness. And albeit his personal performances in his attempted reformation

were no way inferior to Hezekiah's practice in this place, yet neither his performances nor prayers found the like success: he could not plant the fear of the Lord either in his people or in his own children's hearts; and, if we sequester Josiah's attempt of reformation, from Hezekiah's time unto the destruction of the city and temple, there was sometimes on the prince's part, sometimes on the people's part, usually on all parts, prince and people, if not a continual increase of sin, yet a continuance in usual and wonted sins; and where God's judgments have once seized upon a land or people, there is no removal of them without public repentance; no true repentance without prayer; no prayers effectual without fear of the Lord: *Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord*, &c. His prayers were earnest and effectual, because his fear was hearty and unfeigned, not affected. But how fear should perform the office either of mother or midwife, for the bringing forth of successful prayers, is a query not to be omitted, and was the second general proposed.

Pray we may; but our prayers cannot be successful unless they be conceived in faith; and *faith* (as our apostle tells us, Heb. xi. 1.) *is the ground or substance of things hoped for*. And what affinity is there, what agreement can there be, between fear and hope, or confidence, which is, if not the nature, yet the native issue of faith. From these words of the apostle, *Faith is the ground of things hoped for*, haply it was that some late writers have put *fiducia* or *confidence* in the very definition of faith. But we are to consider that the former words of our apostle contain rather a character, than a just description or definition of faith; otherwise his words following had been superfluous, *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*. And under

this more general character, things feared may be as directly contained as things hoped for. But have we any scripture to warrant us, that faith in some cases may be as truly the ground of things feared, as of things hoped for? Yes: *By faith* (saith the apostle, Heb. xi. 7.) *Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his house.* Or if we consider faith not in
323 its universality, as it equally respects the whole word of God, but as it hath a peculiar reference unto his covenant with this people, that (we know) was not a covenant of life only, but a covenant of life and death. And all the writings of the prophets which were to them and are to us the truest leaders and guides unto faith, are as full of threatenings as of promises; their sweetest hymns are composed as well of judgment as of mercy. So that faith, if it be not lame or defective, hath two hands, as well a left hand, to apprehend the truth of God's judgments threatened, whilst we swerve from the ways of life, as a right hand, to lay hold on the truth of his promises, whilst we are not conscious of such deviation. Fear, then, which is no other than an expectation or apprehension of evil, is the left hand of faith; and hope, which is the expectation or apprehension of good, is the right. And they who place the nature of faith in *fiducia*, or confine it unto confidence, do utterly maim it on the left side; and being maimed or dead on the left side, it cannot be sound or lively on the right. That which they term *fiducia*, or confidence in God's promises, if it be not supported with an implanted fear of his judgments threatened, is in true language but presumption; it cannot bring forth the prayers of faith. For prayers made in faith presuppose and include a sincere renouncing or relinquishing of those desires or practices, which by nature, or course

of God's justice, are either incompatible with the blessings which we pray or hope for, or are the causes of the evils threatened or inflicted. He that will offer the sacrifice of prayer unto God for his health must abandon all excess and riot, otherwise he doth but mock God : and he that supplicates for the forgiveness of his sins must be prepared in heart to forgive such as have sinned or trespassed against him : it is our Saviour's own comment upon the prayer which he hath taught us. And hence the heathen Cynic did justly deride such supplicants and sacrificers as continued in riot, whilst they tendered their prayers and sacrifices to intreat God's favour towards themselves for health. Whilst we retain malicious or revengeful purposes towards our neighbours, it is to put in a caveat against our own suits or petitions in the court of heaven.

Now unto this qualification or preparative unto prayer, which consists in the abandoning of those practices or resolutions which stand as a bar or caveat against our petitions and supplications, there is no means so effectual, no method so compendious, as hearty and unfeigned fear of God's judgments: it is the very arm or hand of faith for removing all such obstacles: for fear (as we said before) is the expectation of evil approaching: and the apprehension of any remediless mischief, of any greater inconvenience or inestimable evil, will oversway the hope or expectation of any inferior good, be it matter of pleasure or commodity, by which two matters only we are withdrawn from goodness itself: and if any man be altogether wedded unto temporary delights or contentments, it is for want of fear. In the beginning of a storm, the merchant or passenger will be unwilling to cast any part, especially of his most precious commodities, over-

board; but in case storms increase to his sight or observation, if then the pilot or mariner can persuade him that the ship wherein he sails, unless it be speedily disburdened, will shortly sink, the certain fear of losing all will move him to part with one half, or instant dread of losing his own life will make him willing (if need so require) to part with all. The griping
324 usurer will be ready to release the unconscionable interest covenanted for, if the lawyer in whom he trusts can persuade him, that by rigorous exaction of the use he may come to lose the principal, or to incur a censure, from which both use and principal will not free him. The case of Judah in this extremity was the very same, if we compare the judgments threatened by Micah with the nature and quality of the sins that had provoked them, as you may find in the prophet Micah iii. 10, 11: *They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money.* Now until these greedy hopes of unlawful gain were abandoned, they could not pray in faith. The ministration of public justice for private reward, the priests teaching for hire, and the prophets' divination for money, would (respectively) turn their very prayers into sin. Now what means could be more effectual for abandoning these and the like sins, than the judgment which the prophet there threatened from the Lord—*Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest,* Micah iii. 12?

If the heads of the house of Judah, and princes of the house of Israel, to whom this message is directed, did sincerely and truly believe him that sent it, they could not but fear, lest without their speedy repentance

the Lord would quickly accomplish whatsoever the prophet in his name had threatened. Now hearty and unfeigned fear *that Zion should be ploughed as a field, that Jerusalem should become a heap,* would move all such as had not their habitation only, but the very root of their livelihood in them, to lay a better foundation of their own and of their posterity's welfare, than blood and violence; it would incline the hearts of their rulers and magistrates to break off their iniquity by sincere administration of justice, by almsdeeds, and works of mercy. Fear, again, lest *the mountain of the house,* that is, the temple, &c. (on whose flourishing estate the livelihood and welfare of priests and prophets did so depend as the passenger's life doth on the safety of the ship wherein he sails,) would work their hearts to an observance of the properties or qualifications, to the performance of all the conditions, which are required to faithful and effectual prayers. But of the conditions of successful prayers, and of the qualification of good suppliants, fitter occasion will offer itself hereafter. Thus much towards this purpose we have gotten from these generals, that the hearts of men which have been long accustomed or hardened in perverse courses of grosser sins will hardly be new moulded or refashioned according, or wrought unto the temper and model of Hezekiah's heart, until they be made to melt with fear of such judgments as Micah here threatened against Judah, Jerusalem, and Zion. For producing this melting or mollifying fear, the considerations are specially three: first, the consciousness or apprehensions of such sins as specially provoke God's anger, or solicit his judgments; secondly, a faithful recounting of Divine forewarnings or monitions past, especially if they have been grossly neglected or usually slighted; thirdly, the inspection of the instrumental causes, or

means in probability appointed for the execution of judgments threatened, or a diligent observance of the signs of the time.

As these be the special means for begetting unfeigned fear, so the best method for nurturing up such
325 fear begotten, that it neither grow slavish nor wild, that it end not in desperation, is to know in what sense the Lord is said to repent. For the sins which specially provoke God's fearful judgment against any land or people, we cannot have a more distinct view of them in brief than from the prophet Micah in the forecited place. Bribery and corruption in the seats of justice; oppressions and cruelty in the mighty and wealthy; mercenary temporizings in the sons of Levi; every one of these diseases is dangerous, though alone; but when they all meet in any state or kingdom, they grow deadly. Or if Micah may be no further allowed of than of a single witness, we may add unto him the like testimonies of the prophet Isaiah, who lived in the same time with him. Corruption in the seat of justice did in his time taint the service of the temple, turned the prayers of the rulers into sin, and made their sacrifices become abominable, Isaiah i. 14. The very averseness or unwillingness of such rulers and oppressors as these were, to have the law laid unto them by the prophets, was a prognostic of sudden judgments approaching, Isaiah xxx. 13: *Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes at an instant.* Now if the priests and prophets, whose office it is to discover and repair such breaches, do but daub them with untempered mortar, and so hide and cover them from their sight whom it concerns to beware of them; by this doing they draw the multitude within the reach of that ruin and destruction,

which, like a trap or snare, was ready to fall upon them. Or lest any should suspect that these prognostics did serve only for Jerusalem and Judah, the same prophet instructs us, Isaiah xlvii., that it was oppression and cruelty towards such as *she had conquered* which did draw God's judgments upon Babel. But that which made them to fall so suddenly and unexpectedly upon them, was the popular and manpleasing humours of her soothsayers and diviners.

Jerusalem and Judah were at this time sick of all those three diseases, and therefore had just cause to fear the judgments threatened:

> Quid, quod et hos morbos gravius symptoma sequatur?

There is a symptom mentioned by the prophet Micah which was worse than the diseases themselves—*yet will they lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? none ill can come upon us,* chap. iii. 11. Elsewhere we read this people taxed by God's prophets for trusting sometimes in lies; sometimes in oppression or violence; ofttimes for putting confidence in their own strength, or in the strength of their confederates. But of any branch of this fault they were not at this time guilty, yet taxed no less, as being no less tax-worthy, shall I say, for trusting the Lord, or rather (as the prophet saith) for *leaning on the Lord?* that is, for presuming on his favour in the consciousness of such sins as they now stood charged with. That to presume on God's wonted favours or ordinary protection in the consciousness of extraordinary sins, is a most grievous sin against God, (best proportioned by his sin against God's deputy, who being infected with some dangerous disease should presume to rest himself upon the royal chair,) is a truth unquestionable. But why this people, being thus dangerously

infected, should at this time specially lean upon the Lord, and avouch his warrant for their protection, may well be questioned, and not unfitting to be inquired after. The reason (I take it) is this: These people's foreelders, or these very men themselves in Ahaz' time, had usually been indicted of idolatry, 326 and found guilty, specially of worshipping in high places, and serving groves and idols. But Hezekiah in the very beginning of his reign removed the high places, brake the images, cut down the groves, brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made, 2 Kings xviii. 4. Nor was he more zealous in repressing all worships of false gods or idolatry, than in restoring the service and worship of the true God. Albeit he had found the temple so strangely profaned in the first month of the year, and of his reign, as might seem to require many months' labour for its preparation and cleansing, yet in the second month, by his zealous care, the feast of unleavened bread, with the passover, and other parts of God's service, were celebrated with such public joy and solemnity, as the like had not been seen in Jerusalem from the days of Solomon the son of David, who consecrated the temple, as we read 2 Chron. xxx. 26. In all this reformation the heads and rulers, the priests and Levites, with other parties principally taxed by the prophet Micah, had gone along with their good king, and, no doubt, had entered the same covenant with the Lord their God which he resolved to do, 2 Chron. xxix. 10; and having thus returned unto the God of their fathers, they presumed that he was now turned to them, and would be their guardian and protector against their enemies. Albeit they had seen their brethren, the ten tribes of Israel, about this time led into captivity by the Assyrian, yet this sad accident, through the de-

ceitfulness of hypocrisy, would in all likelihood add more to their presumption than to their fear. They were at all times prone to judge others rashly, and therefore at this time would in all likelihood suspect that this judgment had befallen Israel because they had this plausible pretence or motive, that Israel for the most part would not join with Hezekiah in this reformation of religion, or restauration of God's service, but scoffed at his messengers when they were solemnly invited thereunto. But this reformation, alas! was on Judah's part (the king excepted) but a lame or defective reformation. For whilst they pulled down idols in the high places, suffering the idols of covetousness, oppression, and cruelty to be enshrined in their hearts; whilst they cleanse the temple from material filth or profanation, and in the mean time harboured profaneness and uncleanness in their own breasts, they did not turn to the Lord with their whole hearts, as the Lord in the law required, and Solomon in the consecration of the temple did on their part capitulate and covenant.

However, a half reformation was better than none. Less evil it was to have no idols or images in the high places, no profaneness in the temple, than to have idols both in their breasts and in the woods, than to have the temple of God and their hearts alike profaned. This is true: yet whilst they rest persuaded that the Lord will graciously accept of their lame sacrifice, that is, of this superficial or half reformation, or that he was tied by promise to perform the mercies which he promised to David and Solomon upon true repentance unto them, as they were now affected, *laudem cum crimine pensant,* this confidence or presumption was worse than the abuses which they had reformed. To rely or lean upon the Lord in the

consciousness of those outcrying sins was perfect hypocrisy; and that is, if not worse far, altogether as bad, as downright open idolatry. And the prophet Micah would give posterity to understand, that these delin-
327 quents' presumption upon God's favour, before they repented of their gross sins or delinquencies, did provoke God's fierce wrath against them more than the sins themselves did. They presumed God would be extraordinarily favourable unto them for Jerusalem and Sion's sake, at least for the temple's sake, seeing the Lord had chosen that place to put his name there. But the righteous Lord by his prophet declares himself to be so far from this partiality, or respect of persons, that Jerusalem for their sakes should become a heap; that Zion for their sakes should be ploughed as a field; that the temple in which they trusted should, for their sakes, be made like the high places of the forest.

The sum or resultancy of all that hath been said is this: That as in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him; so in whatsoever place or nation bribery and oppression in the laity, mercenary temporizing in the clergy, and hypocrisy in most sorts abound, God's fearful judgments still do gather as they increase, and, without repentant prayers and supplications, are suddenly poured out like a thunder shower.

But this thesis, or major proposition, will have the faithful assent of all good Christians. All the difficulty will be in framing a minor, or assumption, which shall run parallel with this major; that is, to persuade the magistracy, the gentry, and clergy of any state or kingdom, that they are respectively as faulty, as deeply guilty of these sins, as men of their rank and place were in the state of Judah in Hezekiah's days.

All that I have to say in this point for the present is, to beseech Almighty God that every man amongst us whom it concerns—and it more or less concerns all—may enter into his own heart, and may unpartially examine and judge himself, that this land and people be never so judged of the Lord as Micah had threatened Jerusalem and Judah should be in the days of good Hezekiah.

UPON

JEREMIAH XXVI. 19.

Did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them?

AN hard task it would be to persuade the magistracy, the gentry, and clergy of any state or kingdom throughout Christendom, that they are as deeply guilty of these sins as men of their place and rank in Judah were, against whom Micah denounced that terrible judgment.

Against all that we can allege to this purpose there is one general exception, alike common to all our hearers whom it concerns. They must believe that the state of Judah was deeply tainted with bribery, corruption, and oppression, because the prophet Micah hath said it. But modern preachers are no prophets, nor is all which they say to be accounted any part either of God's law or gospel. The exception indeed is thus far pertinent, that the same Spirit of God which taught the prophets to foresee evils to come, or judgments approaching, did likewise notify unto them many matters of fact present or past, which did provoke God's judgments. But of the like matters of fact, with their qualities, such as are no prophets can have no just notice, can have no better knowledge of them than by hearsay. Now faith cometh not by hearsay,

nor may the messenger of God so far believe all that he hears, though from many mouths, as to make it matter for the pulpit. Yet one of these two we must believe, we may be certain of; either that the magistrates, nobles, and clergy of this realm are as faulty as men of their rank and place in Judah were in Micah's time; or that the people of this kingdom are more malicious and slanderous, at least more quarrellous than the people of Judah were. If *vox populi* were always *vox Dei*, we might proceed with warrant of God's word to make the same conclusion that Micah did, to thunder out present judgment against the court, against the chief cities of this kingdom, and against the church established in this kingdom.

2. But whether are more faulty, magistrates and superiors, in giving just occasion to be thus thought of, or inferiors, in taking occasion where none is given, or greater than is justly given, this I leave to the Searcher of all hearts, who hath reserved the judgments of times and seasons, and of men's demerits in them, unto himself alone by peculiar right of prerogative. The most useful point that I can pitch upon will be 329
to discover the errors or fallacies by which we usually deceive ourselves, even whilst we endeavour to examine or judge ourselves.

3. Now as into cities strongly fortified, well stored with men and victuals, the enemy ofttimes finds entrance, either by the negligence of the watch, or at some secret places for the time ill manned; so into churches or commonweals well grounded in points of faith and orthodoxal doctrine, and abounding with all spiritual food, destruction and ruin (such judgment as Micah here threatened) find easy passage by a twofold negligence or incogitancy, rather than gross error. The first incogitancy common to most is, that we hold

it sufficient to repent us of our own sins, or of the sins of our own times; the second, that even such as are willing to take an accurate view, as well of their forefathers' or predecessors' sins, as of their own sins, or of the sins of the time and place where they live, do often use a false or imperfect scale. For preventing the first incogitance, we are to consider, that albeit God do never punish the children for their father's sins, yet he usually visits the sins of the father upon the children, at least with temporal plagues or punishments, as well public as private: and this visitation is sometimes drawn upon posterity, not so much by a proneness to imitate their foreelders in those actual sins by which they did first provoke God's wrath, as by a promptness to maintain the arts of their foreelders, without addition unto them, especially if they have been warranted by any kind of legality. For children not to confess the sins of their forefathers, not to repent of them, not to make satisfaction for them so far as they have been injurious to men, is, by the rule of divine justice, sufficient to charge the inheritance which descends unto posterity with the punishments due to their actual transgressions from whom it descends. Not to visit the sins immediately upon the first transgressions or transgressors, but to give them and their successors a larger time for repentance, is a branch of God's long-suffering and mercy; but to visit the sins not duly repented of by the first and second upon the third and fourth generation, is a branch of justice declared and avouched by God himself in the second commandment. But this point will meet us again in the reformation attempted by the good Josias. The second incogitance is more pertinent to this place, and in itself more dangerous; and it is this: many which carefully endeavour to frame their lives and actions by

the prophetical rule are not so careful and provident to measure their transgressions by the prophetical scale, or by the balance of the sanctuary, but according to the rate of modern corrupt language. Thus, when we hear the prophets compare the oppressors or corrupt magistrates of their times to ravenous wolves, to brambles or thorny hedges, most men instantly conceive that the parties whom God's prophets (which were no slanderers) did thus deeply censure had taken away their neighbours' lives or goods by strong hand, by some notorious disturbance of public peace, by such palpable facts as with us are said to be contrary to the crown and dignity of the prince. And by this gross calculation many potentates and magistrates, many that take upon them to be reformers of others, run further upon the score of God's wrath than the Jewish rulers in Micah's time did, before they bethink themselves of any danger. Many again of tender consciences in respect of divers duties whereof others make no scruple, when they hear or read the woes 330
denounced against hypocrites, will, with the poet, detest such lying lips, even as the gates of hell, which speak well and mean ill, which have God in their mouths and the devil in their hearts. But he that measures this sin of hypocrisy by this heathenish scale may come to make up the full measure of it before he hath charged it upon his accounts, or bethink himself to be in such arrearages for this sin as deserves to be called for.

4. By the same oversight, many people, which firmly believe the prophetical rules to be most infallibly true, make up the measure of their iniquity before they have made up their intended accounts, or suspect themselves to be in any such arrearages as may deserve the prophet's censure, or to be called upon by threatening God's

judgments. The error itself is muchwhat the same as if a factor, which stands charged with a thousand pounds sterling according to the old hanse or sterling pay, should make up his private reckonings according to the rate of pounds or coin this day current throughout this kingdom: he which thus accounts for any great sum must needs fall into the error of the church of the Laodiceans, Rev. iii., to think himself rich or well beforehand, when he is poor and wretched, and liable to a debt unsatisfiable by himself, unsupportable by his friends: yet our accounts unto God we make up for the most part after this manner.

5. To make these different calculations agree, or to reform or rectify our corrupt language by the rule of the sanctuary, that which we usually call wariness in dealing, or wit to use the benefit of the law, or the advantage of times in making bargains; this, in the prophetical language, is hunting our brother with a net; and whereas the prophet saith of the judges and magistrates of his times, that even the best of them was but a bramble, and the most upright among them as a thorny hedge, this is the very scantlings of the fairest course of legal proceedings which poor men in our times shall find: the least protection which the customary course of law affords unto them is but like the shelter which silly sheep in a storm find under a hedge of thorn or bush of brambles; however the law may protect them from the violence which others intend against them, yet shall they be sure to leave their fleece for this protection. It is a thing much to be wished, that either the courts of temporal law were not so open, or the doors of the sanctuary might be closer shut than they are, specially against such as are upon petty occasions far more ready to spend a hundred pounds in legal vexation of his neighbour or

Christian brother, than to give a hundred pence for Christ's sake, or his church, be the cause never so urgent or just. That which in the language of great landlords is no more than to make the most or best of their own, is in the prophet's dialect neither better nor worse than to play the ravenous wolves—to eat the flesh and gnaw the bones of their poor brethren.

If Micah, Jeremy, or Zephany were now alive, and should see many poor hunger-starved wretches, whose friends and parents had been undone by racking of rents, or hard bargains, or by suits of law, they would take the boldness upon them to pluck our bravest gallants, our wealthiest citizens, our greatest landlords, our gravest lawyers, by the sleeves in the open street, and tell them to their faces—'The limbs and bones of these poor wretches are in the beams and rafters of your stately houses, their flesh and blood is in your dainty dishes, you suck their very marrow in 331
your pleasant cups.' *The bread of the poor*, saith the son of Sirach, *is the life of the needy; he that deprives him of it is a man of blood. He that taketh away his neighbour's living slayeth him; and he that defraudeth the labourer of his hire is a bloodshedder*, Eccles. xxxiv. 21, 22. This character goes deeper than a murderer with us: so doth the prophet Zephany's censure of the corrupt rulers in his time exceed the notion which we have of cannibals; *The princes of the oppressing city are roaring lions, her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones until to-morrow*, Zeph. iii. 3. But are not the sons of Levi in our times as liable to these prophets' censure concerning the priests and prophets of Judah in their days? Hath the clergy no portion in the measure of this land's iniquity? Surely, if the sins of this land at any time within these forty years' past had been

divided into ten parts, the transgressions of the pulpit and printhouses would have largely made up a tenth part. And they have not in any point more offended than either in giving this people a false, or in not giving them a true scale of that hypocrisy which the Spirit of God so much condemns. A kind of hypocrisy there is which consists in pretending one thing and meaning another; but this is so gross, that the very heathens detest it. The greatest cunning or proficiency that practitioners in this kind attain to is to deceive others, not themselves: to applaud their own wits, men of this guise may have some occasion, but no temptation to applaud themselves for extraordinary honesty or sanctity of life; whereas to deceive themselves more than any others, to think themselves more righteous and religious than their neighbours, is the inseparable symptom of hypocrisy truly pharisaical; this is a disease of the soul, which cannot be directly intended or caused; it hath its being only by resultance, and it always results from an extraordinary measure of zeal, but of zeal obstructed, or not uniformly dispensed throughout the whole body of Christian religious duties. Now wheresoever zeal is not uniform, or free from obstructions, the greater zeal men bear unto some particular duties—as to hearing of the word, or that which they conceive to be the form of wholesome doctrine, or to observance of rules for avoiding superstition or profaneness—the more censorious they become of others, and more uncharitable towards all that will not comply with them in their rigid zeal or curiosity of reformation. It was not a pretended nicety, but an internal zeal of straining of gnats, which did so blind and embolden the Pharisees to swallow camels: they knew themselves to be as free from gross idolatry, and were as zealous

reformers of it and breach of sabbath as any living men could be; yet these were the two special sins for which their forefathers were punished; and out of that deep notice which they had in reforming these gross abuses, they said, as they were persuaded, *If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets;* and yet by thus judging their forefathers they did condemn themselves, and were even then making up the measure of their iniquity, as our Saviour foretells them, Matt. xxiii. 32; their mere overprising this reformation did bring forth worse effects in them than worshipping of idols or breach of sabbath. Their fathers had killed the prophets for dissuading them from these two delightful sins. These later Jews put the Prince of prophets to death because he would not comply with them in the rigid reformation of these two sins: this was the very root of their extreme hatred 332
against him. Were there any evangelical prophets, or men of apostolical spirits, amongst us, they might and would make application of our Saviour's speeches in particular to many which take the name of professors, or of reformed religion, as their own peculiar: 'Woe unto you hypocrites, which say, If we had lived in the days of the Scribes and Pharisees, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Son of God.' There is scarce a Christian which is not apt to think thus charitably of himself, and your ordinary minister cannot in particular disprove them; only thus much we know and forewarn in general, *Corruptio optimi semper pessima,* 'That kind of hypocrisy, spleen, or envy, which ariseth from obstructed zeal, or partial observance of evangelical duties, is worse than that hypocrisy which sprung from partial observance of the law.' For men professing Christianity and great zeal

unto truth, to make up the measure of Jewish enmity against Christ, to condemn themselves by judging the Scribes and Pharisees as greater hypocrites than themselves, is a matter as easy (God grant not as usual) as it was for the Jews to make up the measure of their forefathers' sins, and to condemn themselves by judging their ancestors as more bloody persecutors than they would have been in like case.

And if unto this branch of iniquity divination for money and teaching for hire naturally afford nutriment, our sins have been in these particulars more faulty than the times wherein Micah lived in any likelihood could be. The covetous priests and prophets of Judah were not mere hirelings; Judah, I take it, had not many, few or none, whose maintenance did wholly depend upon the voluntary benevolence of them they were to teach.

2. Whereas, amongst us, the greater number of such as take upon them to teach God's people are mere stipendiaries, and yet contend for the pulpit, in opposition to such as have their livelihood from the altar by course of law established, as eagerly as the Jesuits and Dominicans have done of late about the chair in the universities of Spain. Upon these occasions, the meanest corporation amongst us, though consisting for the most part of apron-men, have found opportunities to have their fancies humoured and their ears tickled by their hireling shepherds, after a more delicate manner than any heathen emperor or Christian king could ever procure from their parasites, and the shepherds reflattered by their flocks into a higher conceit of themselves than any pope pretends unto. For though the Roman consistory usurp the monopoly of the Holy Spirit and of his gifts, yet neither doth the pope take upon him to secure the cardinals, nor the

cardinals to secure him, that whensoever either of them die they shall infallibly be saved, and be as glorious saints as St. Peter to-morrow, if they chance to die this day. But why doth the prophet Micah, when he assigns the causes of God's judgments threatened, mention only the sins of the rulers, magistrates, and clergy? Was not the people at that time infected with the popular diseases of all times, as with adultery, murder, luxury of all kinds, and profaneness? No doubt they were. And do not these sins deserve vengeance? They do. Yet the judgments due unto them are usually charged upon the transgressors themselves, not upon the land or state wherein they live; unless the principal transgressors escape unpunished by the connivance or corruption of rulers; in this case the 333
sins of private men become the sins of the land, and solicit public visitations: so doth oppression, specially when it is practised by men of authority upon the poor and helpless men. Of others' wrongs, or of wrong done unto others, that which Eli said unto his sons, 1 Sam. ii. 25, is most true: *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?* Now when judges and magistrates suffer the poor and helpless to suffer wrong, they sin against the Lord; for though he be Lord of all, and the avenger of all wrongs, yet is he in special manner the protector of the fatherless, widow, and the helpless: and what can be more just, than that they which oppress their helpless brethren should be oppressed by foreign enemies? And however men esteem of us the sons of Levi, we are, by God's ordinance and appointment, as fathers to our flock committed to our charge; and though we have not that coercive authority over them which Eli had over his sons, yet we shall partake of

his punishment, if we prove not more faithful remembrancers of their negligences and transgressions than Eli was to the sons of his body. Finally: as the other sins which Micah taxed were their sins which did commit them, so their leaning upon the Lord in the consciousness of such sins were the sins of the priests and prophets, which should have forewarned them of the wrath to come, and have put them in mind of their strange neglect of warnings past. That the neglect of God's forewarnings, or summons to repentance, whether these be mere monitions, or mixed with punishments, is a fearful symptom of a dangerous disease, and, without repentance, a presage of death, is a point so common and known, as it needs no proof. The divers kinds of such forewarnings, sometimes given by the host of reasonless creatures, sometimes by the reasonable, and the danger increasing by their neglect, are pathetically recounted by the prophet Amos, chap. iv., with this item or caveat still repeated at the neglect of every message, *Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest,* &c. vv. 6, 7. *I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord,*

vv. 9, 10. The same burden is twice repeated in the verses following, for not returning unto the Lord after two calamities inflicted upon them, distinct from the former as well for time as quality. The space or distance of time between the first and last of these forewarnings was so long, that many of them which had known the first, or could take notice of it, were dead before the last approached, and most of them whom the last message did specially concern were unborn when the first warning was given; and yet the neglect of it is laid to their charge. And of all these forewarnings or chastisements, beside the desolation of some cities, there is scarce one which hath not been paralleled by the like given to this kingdom long ago.

9. To begin with that which most resembles this 334
forewarning given by the prophet Micah unto this people—*Zion, for your sakes, shall be ploughed as a field.* This was to them a mere monition, for God repented of the plague denounced against them. Such was the powder plot unto us; it was a gentle monition of a fearful judgment. For however such as foretold it were lying prophets, sons of Belial, whom no son or child of God was bound to believe when they threatened judgment, yet the warning which God in mercy gave us by them was truly real. The sepulchres of our kings were nearer the point to have been more pitifully ploughed than Sennacherib intended to plough Zion, or the city of David, when in the days of Hezekiah he did besiege it: God's mercy towards us was that time no less than at any time it had been unto Zion; our deliverance, though not so miraculous, was yet no less wonderful for valuation than Jerusalem's deliverance from Sennacherib's army shortly after this forewarning by Micah. But did either warning or

deliverance take the same effect with us as the like had done with Hezekiah and his people? Herein we truly imitate Hezekiah, not so much in the use which he made of this forewarning, as in his demeanour after his recovery from his sickness, that we do not render according to the reward bestowed upon us. An anniversary thanksgiving was upon our delivery by public authority presently enjoined, and hath since, by all sorts of men professing true religion (to the eyes of men) been duly observed. Unto this day, young and old, whilst they bless God for his mercies, accurse the malice of such as did project that fearful plague against us; and his curse be upon him that shall think either their practice or principles, whence they inferred or sought to warrant it, can be detested too much. Yet for all this we may detest their practice and religion, yea, we may magnify God's mercies towards us, though never too much, yet much amiss. If our acknowledgment of his mercies had been or were yet sincere and entire, our fear of his judgments ever since that time would have held full equipoise with our hatred or detestation of our adversaries' mischievous imaginations against us. For the unerring eye of his all-seeing providence and omnipotently steadfast hand, by which he wields the scales of justice, would not have suffered his consuming wrath to come any nearer to us than we were come unto the full measure of our iniquity.

10. The first thing which then was or now is to be inquired after, is, what were the extraordinary and special sins which drew God's judgments so near upon us? These were not the cruelty of laws enacted against professors of that religion which these traitors professed, as they as foolishly as impiously allege; nor was the negligence or connivance of such as were put in trust with the execution of these laws the cause of

the judgment then threatened, as some others out of misguided zeal suspect. Of such negligence or omission, or of whatsoever else may give any advantage to the adversaries of our peace and religion, there were some positive causes in ourselves, God only knows how many; but of these we cannot but take notice, which the prophet Micah expresseth, or some like unto them; as, sacrilege, oppression, and bribery in the laity; simony and timeserving in the clergy; luxury, profaneness, and hypocrisy in both. Now when the professors of true religion shall give undoubted proof of 335
their constant and impartial zeal against these foul enormities, or for inquiring after the most enormous delinquents in all these kinds, there will be good hope that the laws already enacted or projected against idolatry, against superstition and false religion, shall have their wished success: but suppose, that upon the occasion or opportunity which these idolatrous miscreants had in a manner thrust into the hands of our lawmakers, the suppression of idolatry and superstition throughout this land had been more exact and more complete than that which Hezekiah in the beginning of his reign had wrought in Judah; was there any probability that those other diseases which Micah mentions would have been one jot abated? any likelihood that the most amongst us would not have learned that song or ditty by heart, *Is not the Lord now amongst us?* and the antiphony unto it would have been, *No evil can come upon us.* Other gross exorbitancies usually come within the stroke of the civil sword, and lie open to the execution of wholesome laws; but for snipping this secret hypocrisy, or presumptuous leaning upon the Lord, though in the professors of true religion, the severest execution of wholesome laws, or exercise of the civil sword, hath

no force or dint, the cure of this disease properly belongs unto the divine, and the method to cure it is contrary to the ordinary course of law or physic; we must break a general custom of this people, and teach them not to rate their affections unto truth by their opposition unto falsehood, not to measure their zeal and love to true religion by their hatred of false religion. These be the very roots of that hypocrisy or presumption which Micah so deeply taxeth in the state of Judah, the chief ingredient in the leaven of the Pharisees.

But lest more of this people should slide into an error too common unto many, as if such a reformation of religion as they affect would acquit or secure the state and kingdom from all danger of God's threatened judgments, let us here behold the severity and mercy of our gracious God: mercy, I say, towards us, and severity towards our brethren, professors of reformed religion in neighbour nations, whom he hath of late subjected to the enemies' sword, and other calamities of war; for what transgression in particular he only knows; but surely not for those transgressions which some, out of discontented zeal, conceive to be the only cause of his displeasure against this nation, whensoever any cross or calamity befalls themselves; for no man can suspect those foreign churches which he hath visited of late were deeply guilty either of connivance to superstition, or too much favouring Arminianism. However, the righteous Lord by chastising them doth forewarn us to examine and judge ourselves; and if we find no other causes or probable occasions to fear the approach of the like judgments upon ourselves, yet even this alone will in the day of visitation make a great addition to our general account, that we did not humble ourselves with fear and trembling, whilst the

Lord did humble and correct them, whilst his hand was heavy upon such of our nation as were sent abroad for their succour. Our consciences will one day accuse us, (when we shall have occasion to seek the Lord,) that we have not for the years late past besought his goodness with greater fear and devotion to remove the rod of his wrath from them.

But did the Lord in this interim direct no messen- 336
gers of his wrath unto us within our own coasts? Did mortality and famine only follow the camp abroad or towns besieged in other nations? The famine (God's name be praised for it!) hath not for many years been either universally spread throughout this land, or extraordinary grievous upon any greater portion of it, and yet hath left so deep impression in some native members of this great body, as may evidently convince the rest of great stupidity in not sympathising more deeply with them: and stupidity or dulness in any member, whilst others suffer is an infallible symptom of a dangerous disease, ofttimes a certain prognostic of death; and he were but an indocile Christian that could not, by those known calamities which much people of this land have suffered from this messenger, instruct himself how easy it is for the righteous Judge to bring such calamity upon this kingdom, by this messenger alone, as would move even the most malicious and cruel enemies that we have had, to bemoan our case, although we were fully assured of a constant peace with all other neighbour nations, that have any power or ability to annoy us by the sword, or any practice of hostility. Rome in her growth, in her height of greatness, and in her declining days, had received many grievous wounds, was subject in all estates to fearful calamities and disasters, yet never in such a lamentable and rueful plight as the famine

had brought her to, if we may judge of her inward grief either by her bitter outcries or by the dejected and ghastly dress in which one of her sons, then living, hath set her forth :

> Si mea mansuris meruerunt mœnia nasci,
> Jupiter auguriis, si stant immota Sibillæ
> Carmina, Tarpeias si nec dum despicis arces,
> Advenio supplex, non ut proculcet Oaxen
> Consul ovans, nostræve premant pharetrata secures
> Susa : nec ut rubris aquilas figamus arenis :
> Hæc nobis, hæc ante dabas ; nunc pabula tantum
> Poscimus : ignoscas miseræ, pater optime, genti ;
> Extremam defende famem, satiavimus iram
> Siqua fuit ; lugenda Getis, et flenda Suevis
> Hausimus, ipsa meos horreret Parthia casus [c].

After a solemn resignation of all claim, title, or interest to all former victories or wonted triumphs, she takes upon her the beggar's garb, and becomes an humble suppliant for bread; and for that not in just competency, but in such a measure as might assuage or prevent extremity of hunger, of which she had suffered so much, as she thought would have given full satisfaction either to her ancient and inveterate foes or to the most malignant of her modern enemies; enough, as she thought, to have drawn sighs from the barbarous Getes, or to have wrung tears from the merciless Swab, or to have cast Parthia herself into a swoon, so she might have been a spectator of her rueful and tragical plight: yet all this evil came upon her not by observation; it was not preventable by any forecast or policy besides that which Hezekiah here uses: this would have sufficed, so it had been practised in time.

But it is not the representation of that which hath befallen others long since, or may hereafter befall our-

[c] Vid. plura apud Claudianum initio belli Gildonici.

selves, which will so much affect us, as the recognition of that which we ourselves have formerly suffered. 337 It will not then, I hope, be unseasonable to put you in mind how in these latter times, whilst neighbour nations address their ambassadors to this court, either to condole the death of our sovereigns or to congratulate our joy for the happy continuance of royal succession, there still hath come one unwelcome or unexpected ambassador, either with them or before them, to this people. And however he seem to plead for the grave, yet his message is from heaven, and for our peace; though he find audience for the most part with needy, sick, or dying men, yet his instructions are principally directed to the living and potent amongst us, and the tenor of them is in effect thus: 'Think you that those whom the Lord hath wounded with his poisonous arrows were greater sinners than yourselves, or that they have suffered more than they have deserved? *I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish:* unless you prepare your hearts to meet the Lord while he is on the way, a greater plague than the plague of pestilence is coming against you.' Yet hath that plague been twice in our memory more fearful than in the days of our forefathers. To omit that great mortality which was almost universal throughout this land about twenty-seven years ago, the calamities which followed upon the second arrival, or return of this ambassador about five years ago, did leave a live print or character of that fear by which the prophet Amos describes the day of the Lord. Amos v. 18, 19: *The day of the Lord,* saith he, *is darkness, and not light. As if a man did fly from a lion, and a bear met him; and went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.* Many fled from the great city

as a man would fly from a lion, and thought themselves safe if they could get into a ship for some other port, but sped no better than if they had met with a bear, Death being as ready as they were to embark itself as a passenger for every port, authorized to execute his commission as well by sea as by land: others, coming to the shore, were more harbourless in the wished for haven than if they had committed themselves to the merciless waves of the sea; which way soever they took, their case was like unto a stricken deer, *hæret lateri lethalis arundo;* they could not shift aside from God's arrow, which still took up some vital part for his mark: some, after their arrival in their native soil, wandered without companions to support them in their weakness, and lastly died in the fresh and open air, without that comfort which the infected places from which they fled might have afforded them, without consorts in their sighs and groans, without such mutual expressions of grief as sympathy of nature brings forth in the beasts of the field.

But amongst the woful spectacles which the calamity of those times presented, none methinks more apt to imprint the terror of God's judgments deeper, than to have seen men otherwise of undaunted spirits, men whom no enemy's looks or brags could affright, afraid to hold parley with their native countrymen that came unto them with words of love and peace, more aghast to embrace their dearest friends or nearest kinsfolks than to grasp an adder or a snake. The plague of pestilence is above all other diseases catching, and such as have been most observant of its course tell us, men of covetous minds, or unseasonably greedy of gain, are usually soonest caught by it, though exposed to no greater or more apparent visible danger

than others are. The course which this messenger of death observes (if these men's observations of it be 338 true) may lead our conjecture to one special cause why it was sent amongst us with such large commission: surely, if in the days of health and peace it had not been usual for one neighbour to prey upon another, and to verify the saying, *Homo homini lupus*, the neighbourhood and presence of men of the same nation and profession would not have become more terrible unto others, than if their habitations had been amongst wolves or lions or other ravenous creatures. But to what end soever this fearful messenger was sent amongst us, the tenor of his message either was not well understood, or is not perfectly remembered. And for this reason his commission hath been renewed of late, in the times of our hopes and joy for the continuance of royal succession in a straight line. But God's name be ever blessed, who hath hitherto so tempered his judgments with mercy, that we have more just cause of joy and thanksgiving for the birth of one, than of sorrow for the death of many. Yet let not this, I beseech you, abate our fear of future judgments, or occasion us to think that the Lord either hath repented, or will repent of the evil which he hath so often threatened, whereof he hath given this land and people so many warnings, until we bring forth better fruits of our repentance than hitherto we have done. That thus we may do, let us pray continually to the Lord that he would teach us to fear as Hezekias did, that he would teach us to pray as Hezekias did. As for him, he is the same Lord still, the same loving father to us that he was to Judah, and cannot forget to repent whensoever we shall truly turn unto him. Convert us, O Lord, and we shall be converted.

THIRD SERMON

ON

JEREMIAH XXVI. 19.

And the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them. Thus might we procure great evil against our souls.

THIS is the resolution of a controversy, debated from the beginning of this chapter unto this place, between the priests and the prophets and the people and the princes of the land, whether the prophet Jeremiah were to be put to death for saying, *The Lord would make his temple like Shiloh, and the city of Jerusalem a curse to all the earth.*

The priests and prophets contend that he was to be put to death, and the people at the first concur with them in this bloody sentence, but afterward comply with the princes, whose verdict was, that he was not worthy to die, because he had spoken to them in the name of the Lord their God. And upon this verdict the elders of the land give judgment from a ruled case in the prophet Micah, who had spoken more terrible words against both city and temple in more peremptory manner than Jeremiah now had done, and yet not therefore put to death, but reverenced by Hezekiah, as you have it in the beginning of this 19th verse: *Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put Micah at all to death? did he not fear the Lord, and besought the Lord?*

Now if the solemn practice of so good a king as Hezekiah was could not move them, yet the happy success of his practice should in reason allure them to deal more mildly with Jeremiah than was intended by them: for upon Hezekiah's prayers and repentance *the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against Jerusalem and Zion:* and when they further add, *Thus might we procure great evil against our souls,* they imply thus much: that if this present assembly do not repent of their ill intentions against Jeremiah, the Lord would not repent of the evil which by his mouth he had pronounced against them.

The points which offer themselves to be discussed are but two; the first, in what sense God is said to *repent;* the second, in what case it is said, *that God will not repent,* or *that he is not as man, or the son of man, that he should repent.*

Deus tunc pœnitere dicitur, quando non facit aut quod minatur, aut quod promittit: "God," as some give out who take upon them to resolve this point, "is then said to repent when he doth not effect the evil which he threateneth, or the good which he promiseth."

All this is true; yet no true definition, no just expression of repentance, either as it is appliable in scripture to God or man. Most true it is, that whensoever God is said to repent, it must be conceived that 340
he did not effect either the evil which he threatened, or the good which he promised: but it is not reciprocally true, that whensoever God doth not bring the evil of punishment to pass which he threateneth, or the good which he promiseth, it is rightly said or conceived that he did repent.

A loving father may sometimes threaten to chastise, sometimes promise to reward the son whom he loveth best, and yet not be truly thought to repent, albeit

he neither chastise nor reward him; for he may thus mingle threatenings with encouragements with purpose only to try his present disposition.

Thus we read that God, who is a most loving Father to mankind, did command Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac whom he loved. This was a threatening command, at least in respect of Isaac. Now albeit the Lord did withhold Abraham's hand from executing this command, yet do we not read, nor is it to be conceived, that God did repent of that which he gave Abraham in charge. The reason is, because he charged Abraham thus to do, not with purpose to have Isaac then presently sacrificed, but only to try the sincerity and strength of Abraham's faith and obedience; and by this trial to gain his assent unto the offering up of the seed promised from the beginning of the world, which was from this time irreversibly ordained to be the seed of Abraham. For seeing God from the beginning had determined to give his only Son for the redemption of man, it was his good pleasure to confirm this promise by oath unto a man that was ready to offer up his only son in sacrifice unto God; and Abraham from this very intended work, as St. James tells us, *was called the friend of God:* the promise made to our first parents was now accomplished by way of contract or covenant betwixt God and Abraham, that the Son of God and seed of Abraham should be offered up in sacrifice for a blessing unto all the nations of the earth. This being the end or purpose of God in commanding Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac, in whom his seed was called, there is no semblance of repentance in God, although he did withhold Abraham's hand from doing that which he had commanded him to do.

They therefore come nearer unto the meaning of the

Holy Ghost in this particular expression, who tell us, that *Deus tunc pœnitere dicitur, quando non facit quod facturus erat:* "God is then said to repent when he doth not that which he was about to do, or that which he intended or purposed to have done." For without a revocation or reversing of somewhat seriously purposed or intended, there can be no true notion of repentance whether in God, in man, or angels.

And this notion or expression of repentance as it is attributed unto God in scripture, we have expressly delivered by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xviii. 7—10. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.*

This general, to my observation, was first drawn into a rule or doctrinal form by the prophet Jeremiah; yet the truth of the former part of it was experienced long before in the men of Nineveh, though contrary 341
to the mind and expectation of the prophet Jonas, not out of a nescience of this rule, or God's usual dealing with men, but out of a particular dislike or discontent that the sentence which God had commanded him to pronounce should not be put in execution.

The sentence was, *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed*, Jonas iii. 4.

This solemn proclamation the Lord did dictate unto

him as it is ver. 2. Did the Lord thus speak to try the Ninevites' disposition only? had he no intention or thought, as the prophet Jeremiah speaks, to overthrow or destroy the city? Certainly the Ninevites did think he had; and yet this their thought or opinion is commended unto us by the Holy Ghost under the style or title of *belief;* for so it is said, ver. 5, *The people of Nineveh believed God.*

Wherein did they believe in him, or what did they believe of him?

Surely they believed, in the first place, that he meant as he spake, that he had a purpose or intention to destroy them. They knew their sins had deserved no less, and they believed that God was a just God, to inflict upon them what they deserved; but they believed withal that he was a God of mercy and forgiveness; and out of this fear thus tempered with hope, they address themselves to become as capable of his mercy as they had been of his justice. For so it follows, that *the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even unto the least of them;* and thus they did both by the king's royal command and example: an admirable resolution in a heathen king, a practice more orthodoxal than was the doctrine of the priests or prophets which questioned Jeremiah for saying, *the Lord would make his temple like Shiloh, unless they did speedily repent.* But what was the issue of the Ninevites' repentance? *God,* saith the text, *saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not,* ver. 10.

Did he then but say that he would do this evil unto

them, without any thought or purpose to do it? If he had but only said it, and not meant it, he could not be truly said to repent him of it: his saying supposeth his intent or thought; for he said it solemnly and publicly, not tentatively, or by way of trial only.

But if God had a serious will or purpose to destroy Nineveh at this time, and destroyed it not, how is it true which the psalmist saith, *that he doth whatsoever he will in heaven and in earth?* So that if it be true what we have before delivered, we shall be thought by some to admit either some defect in his power or some alteration in his will. Thus little children, by turning long round, imagine that the globe of heaven and earth runs round with them, until their brains be settled; and men of riper years (unless their understandings correct their fancy) conceit that towers and steeples, with the shores whereon these or other edifices stand, do move from us, whilst we swiftly pass by them or from them.

But to think there should be any change in God's will, because many things which he seriously willeth are not effected, is an error a great deal more gross than either of the former. For all the change is in the object of his will, that is, in the things willed or nilled by him.

The answer to this objection, or discovery of this 342
fallacy's original, was most acutely made and punctually delivered by the schoolmen long ago, *Aliud est mutare voluntatem, aliud est velle mutationem;* "It is not all one for God to change his will, and to will a change in things created by him."

God never changeth his will; it always is as his nature is, absolutely immutable, or, as our apostle speaks, *without shadow of change:* yet by one and

the same unchangeable will he may and doth will variety of changes, diversity of alterations, in the things willed by him, or in the sentences denounced by his prophets in his name. He worketh all things by the counsel of his will, and as St. Gregory saith, *Nunquam mutat consilium,* "His counsel doth never change or alter;" *sæpius tamen mutat sententiam;* "his unchangeable unalterable counsel may work a change in all things besides itself."

It was his just will seriously at this time to destroy the Ninevites; and this his will or purpose we will conceive to be more unchangeable, more immovable, than a rock of adamant; and Nineveh, whilst she continued her wonted course in sin, was like a ship before a full wind, which had outsailed her watch whilst the mariners slept; and by this error ready to dash against the immovable rock of Divine justice, had not her pilots and governors (awaked out of their sleep upon the prophet Jonas' summons) tacked about, and directed their course another way.

If whilst we acknowledge God's will to be most unchangeable we consider it withal to be a most complete and most constant rule of equity and goodness, *qua talis,* it will most necessarily follow, that even in this respect, that it is a rule most complete and most unchangeable, it must have one award for Nineveh raging with cruelty and oppression; another for Nineveh turning from the violence that was in their hands: one doom for Nineveh wallowing in drunkenness, riotousness, and uncleanness; another for Nineveh watching, washing herself with tears, fasting, and sitting in ashes covered with sackcloth: one sentence for Nineveh polluting herself with pride of heart, with perjury and blasphemy; another for Nineveh humbling

herself under the mighty hand of God with fasting, devoutly calling upon his name with tears and supplications.

For albeit God knoweth all things, as well things to come as present, and doth nothing otherwise than from eternity it was determined to be done, yet even this we know was determined from eternity, that every man in every nation should be rewarded, not according to the identity of their persons or place, but according to the diversity of their ways, to the variety of their works.

Though rocks in the sea be immovable, yet we easily conceive how the distance or aspect betwixt them and ships which sail to and fro doth vary every moment whilst the ships are in motion. Conceive then Jesus Christ to be, as he truly is, the immovable rock of our salvation, but withal aliving rock and an all-seeing rule, and it will be easier to conceive how the doom or sentence from eternity awarded to every man's actions doth hourly change, either for quality or degree, as men do change their course of life, whether from good to evil, or from evil to good, from good to better, or from evil to worse.

So then repentance in these Ninevites did import, not only a will of change, but a true change in their wills and affections: they turned their delight in sin 343
into sorrow for sins past, and good resolutions not to transgress so again.

Repentance in God importeth only a will of change, nor is it the will of every change, but a change of the doom, or sentence denounced, which the scripture calls repentance in God. And here I should have set a period to the first point proposed, did not some men question whether that belief wherewith the Ninevites are said to have believed God were a true belief, or an

act of *saving faith*. However, such it was as did save them from present destruction; but so it might be, in some men's judgments, and yet be but a temporary historical faith. For how could they pray in faith according to the apostle's rule, seeing they doubted whether God would shew mercy upon them or no; for so much seems to be included in the resolution, ver. 9, *Who can tell if God will return and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, and we perish not?*

Now thus to doubt may seem to argue that their prayers were not of true faith.

But these two sacred maxims, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," "Whatsoever is done with doubt or scruple is not of faith," are oftener wrested—sometimes to abet presumption in respect of God, sometimes disobedience towards his vicegerents—than any other maxims in sacred writ besides. For this present, the limitation of them is briefly this:

Whensoever the doubt or controversy stands betwixt a man's belly or purse and his soul or conscience, the apostle's rule (*whatsoever is not of faith is sin*) is universally true; whosoever doth any thing for his belly or purse, or matters of such temporal consequence, which he probably doubts may wound his soul or conscience, his action or choice is not of faith, is truly sinful. In other cases, he that intends to do much good must resolve to do many things whereof he cannot but doubt, whereof he cannot be resolved but by the event or success, yet not sin.

Thus these Ninevites were uncertain or doubtful, whether the Lord would repent or no of the evil threatened against them, and yet, notwithstanding this doubt, they did well, exceeding well, to fast and pray that he might repent; and in thus doubting and thus doing, they declare not their works only, but their

divinity to have been much better than theirs who condemn the like actions of heathen men for sinful, because their persons were not sanctified by saving faith. As for these Ninevites, they had a true notion of that truth which the scripture teacheth; to wit, that as God is often said to repent, so some special cases there be in which he doth not, in which he will not upon any terms repent, and of which the prophet's saying is most true, *He is not a man, or the son of man, that he should repent.*

And such, for instance, was the case of Saul, the first king of Israel, in the issue, though not from the beginning of his reign, or from that point of time wherein God revealed that branch of his will to Samuel, 1 Sam. xv. 11: *It repenteth me that I have set Saul up to be king: for he is turned backward from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.* And he that turns his back from God's commandments shall be sure to meet his judgments in the face.

But this heavy sentence against Saul (as it there followeth) *grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night;* but his cries were not heard; for so it follows, ver. 35, *that Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless he mourned for Saul:* and in ver. 1. chap. xvi. Samuel is 344
expressly forbidden to mourn for Saul: and if he might not mourn for him, he might not pray for him.

A lamentable case, that so great a prophet, so good a man as Samuel was, might not pray, might not mourn for his sovereign lord, whom by God's special command he had anointed; but the cause is intimated, chap. xv. 28, 29. For when Saul, by seeking to hold the prophet from departing from him, had rent his

coat, he returns this heavy message unto him: *The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent.* And Samuel had no reason to mourn for him, or to pray to God for reversing this sentence, after he knew the Lord would not be entreated to recall it.

But here the aliens from the commonweal of Israel, or men of Julian's disposition, would object, "Is the God of Israel no otherwise affected towards his people, towards kings of his own making, than the gods of the heathen (whom ye despise) were towards kingdoms or monarchies which served them? Doth he give his people just cause to complain of him as the heathen poet did of his gods, when he saw Rome so rent and torn with civil wars that it could not long stand? *Heu faciles dare summa Deos, eademque tueri—Difficiles!* Will the Strength of Israel advance a man to a kingdom which never sought it, but had it put upon him whilst he was seeking his father's asses? And will he not be entreated to keep him in it after long possession, after many adventures of his body and effusion of his blood for supporting it? Will he repent of the good which he had purposed to do for Saul, and will he not repent of the evil which he had denounced against him?" Thus uncatechised flesh and blood, or men not instructed in the ways of God, would repine. Now it were an easy answer to say, that God did thus peremptorily deal with Saul because it was his absolute will to depose him, and to choose David in his place. But this or the like answer would make a foolish heathen stark mad, and move a man that hovered betwixt heathenism and Christianity to fall

quite from us: whereas we are bound by the apostle's rule *to give no offence, not only to the church of God, but neither to the Jew nor to the Gentile;* whereas this answer gives just occasion of offence to them all. For sure the scripture is plain, and I think no Christian will (in the general) deny, that Saul did at this time much better deserve to be deposed, than either he or David did to be elected king: his sins were the meritorious cause of his rejection, but what sins in particular is not so apparent.

Saul, as some ancient interpreters observe, was once little in his own eyes, and then he was a great man in God's sight; but he grew great, exceeding great in his own eyes; and the greater he thus grew, the more he waned in God's favour, whose eternal will and pleasure is, *to give grace unto the meek and humble, and to resist and bring down the proud.*

All this is true, but too general to give satisfaction to the doubt proposed: for God doth never so peremptorily reject any lawful prince as he did Saul, without hope of repentance, or reversing the sentence denounced against him, unless it be for some excessive multitude or full measure of sin, or for some ominous or prodigious sins.

We read only of two remarkable sins committed by Saul before his rejection; the one was for offering a burnt-offering, and for his intendment to offer a peace-offering 345
before Samuel came unto him, 1 Sam. xiii. 9—12: and for this transgression Samuel saith unto him, ver. 13, *Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.* Saul then had God's promise before for the continuance of his kingdom. But of this good, truly intended to him, the Lord from

this time repents; as it follows, ver. 14: *But now the kingdom shall not continue.* Yet upon this fact it is not said that the Lord would not repent of the sentence denounced against him.

But what was Saul's folly in all this, or was it any? for as it is said, ver. 8, *he tarried there seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed.* It was not so great a folly for Saul, being a king, to stay no longer, as disrespect in Samuel not to come within the time appointed: was it not more fit that the prophet should stay for the king, than the king for the prophet? The text is plain, that *Saul stayed seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed;* but it is not so plain out of the text, nor is it any way probable, that these seven days were observed by Saul in that season, or to that end which Samuel had appointed.

Two good interpreters[d], and ancient in respect of our times, have observed an amphibology in Samuel's words; and it was Saul's folly to make choice of the sinister or wrong sense.

The words you have now written were not written but spoken then by Samuel, chap. x. 8; and however the Hebrew text as it is now pointed, but especially the Latin and the English, do cast the sense of Samuel's words that way which the objection supposeth, yet the matter itself and other circumstances sway the other way, in excuse of Samuel, and aggravation of Saul's folly. *Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings.* And here they make a pause or full sense, and begin another at these words, *Seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee.*

[d] Rupertus and Angelomus.

But the original will bear another sense, retaining the selfsame words, only altering the pause or point, as thus; *Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice the sacrifice of peace offerings for seven days:* and then begin the second clause thus, *Thou shalt tarry till I come to thee:* as if he had said, 'See in any case thou tarry till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do.' Samuel it seems went in the mean time to ask counsel of the Lord, as being not himself fully instructed in this great business which he was towards.

If Saul did usurp the priest's office in offering sacrifices upon pretence of Samuel's stay, this was prodigious. If he took upon him only to appoint the time for the sacrifice or supplication, designing some priests for exercising the sacred function, this was a great deal too much, more than mere folly; for all this was by God himself reserved for Samuel, who was the interpreter or spokesman betwixt God and Saul. The sacrifice, no question, was a public and solemn sacrifice, such as Solomon made at the consecration of the temple, whose solemnity lasted *full seven days:* and it is probable that this present solemnity which Samuel had appointed was the consecration of Saul, or establishing him in his kingdom, had he not foolishly wronged himself by trenching upon the priest's or the prophet's function, or upon both.

But whether these mentioned, or some others, or 346
these with others, were the principal branches of Saul's folly, certain it is, that neither any of these, nor all of these, did make his doom to be inevitable, or his deposition irreversible. For though Samuel, upon notice of this his folly, did foretell that God would give his kingdom unto another, yet he did not expressly add,

that the Lord would not repent him of this evil denounced against him: and this addition being not made, the sentence was liable to the ordinary rule of interpreting God's threatenings, Jer. xviii.

Saul, by repenting of this folly, might have been capable of that pardon whereof he made himself altogether uncapable by his second more gross and more stupid transgression of God's commandment. What was that? His indulgence towards Agag and his people. Is it then an unpardonable sin in Christian princes to shew pity unto heathenish or idolatrous princes whom God hath given into their hands by victory and battle? No. To gather such general doctrines or uses from particular instances in scripture as some have done from Hezekiah's demolishing the brasen serpent, or from Ahab's suffering Benhadad to escape with life, is but the symptom of distempered zeal, misled by ignorance. Nor will it follow, because Ahab was more remarkably and more severely punished for suffering Benhadad to escape with life, than he was for putting poor Naboth to death, that therefore this slaughter was a less sin in itself than the other. For we read that Ahab repented him of his unjust and cruel dealing with Naboth; but so he did not of his other folly, in suffering Benhadad to escape with life: and for this reason God repented him of the sentence denounced against Ahab by Elias; so did he not repent of that other sentence denounced by another prophet, *Because thou hast* &c.

However, this was not all wherein Saul was faulty; though foully faulty in all this, more faulty in sparing Agag, than Ahab was in sparing Benhadad; for God had expressly commanded him *utterly to destroy Amalek, not sparing man or beast.* But so the same God commanded the Israelites to destroy the Canaan-

ites; yet their sin in entering league with the Gibeonites was not equivalent to Saul's transgression; for the condition of Amalek and the king's was much worse than the condition of other heathens, more uncapable of pity from the Israelites than the Amorites or the Hittites were. For God had denounced hostility against this people by solemn oath, Exod. xvii. 15, 16: *And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-nissi: for he said, Because the Lord hath sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.* Now the Amalekites being thus solemnly declared to be God's enemies in so high a degree, the Israelites were bound to wreak his foehood against that nation: *Nunc, olim, quocunque darent se tempore vires.*

When Saul was made king of Israel, to fight the battles of the Lord, and at this time expressly enjoined to destroy Amalek, his sin in sparing Agag and the cattle was a sin of like nature, as if a judge or sworn magistrate, being put in trust to do justice in a particular unto which his sovereign lord had peremptorily and determinately sworn, should upon bribe or other sinister respects neglect his duty, and make his master (as much as in him lay) forsworn. And for any inferior judge thus to do deserves more bodily deaths than one: it would be disloyalty for his dearest friend to sue for his pardon. It is a most catholic rule in 347
divinity, of which the heathens had an ingrafted notion, the ancient Jews an undoubted tradition, and the use and doctrine of it unanimously received by primitive Christians, 'That wheresoever we find either matter of blessing or matter of cursing denounced by oath, there the sentence is irreversible, God will not repent.' We see the rule first experienced in those murmuring Israelites, to whom God had sworn, *That*

they should not enter into his rest: for though they repented of their folly, and besought God with tears that he would revoke his sentence, offering their service (which before they had neglected) for conquering the land of promise, yet the Lord would not hear them, and, which is more remarkable, he would not hear Moses in this particular for himself, because he was involved as an accessary in that sentence, *for he spake unadvisedly on their behalf.* So Moses himself doth testify, Deut. iii. 23, &c. *And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, I pray thee, let me go over, and see this good land which is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee unto the top of Pisgah, and behold it with thine eyes: for over this Jordan thou shalt not go.*

So then God repented him that he had made Saul king over Israel, because he had the kingdom only by mere promise, not by promise confirmed by oath. But God would not repent of his deposition, nor reverse his sentence, because Saul by his preposterous indulgence unto Amalek, (God's sworn enemy,) did by this fact incur the sentence of deposition by oath; and more deeply participate with the Amalekites than Moses had done with the Israelites, whom God had cut off by oath from entering into the land of Canaan.

I hope I shall not be thought to flatter men, whilst I bless the name of our glorious Lord for setting a king over us, as far from Saul's or Ahab's disposition as they were from the disposition of king Hezekiah,

and for giving him a people nothing so untoward, either towards God or him, as the murmuring Israelites were towards God and his servant Moses.

But whatsoever hath been said or is written concerning the kings of Israel or Judah was written for our instruction, whether prince or people.

The most immediate use of the point last discussed concerns great princes and their followers: their followers thus far, that they never solicit or importune their sovereign lords, or in case they do, it deeply concerns princes not to suffer themselves to be wrought by any solicitation or importunity, to favour any cause which stands accursed by God's eternal law, nor to take the persons of any men into their protection whom the Supreme Judge hath exempted from his; not to patronage any whom the law of God and man have designed unto utter destruction: for by doing such bodily good to prodigious malefactors, they shall procure, as my prophet speaks, *great evil unto their own souls;* evils at least temporal unto themselves and to their people, of which the Lord will not repent. For where such favour is shewn unto men, or rather where favour and pity is shewed unto such men as God is thus highly displeased with, there can be no true fear of the Lord. In whomsoever that fear is, it is predominant, and will command all other affections, whether of hope or fear, whether of hatred, love, or 348
favour to men. Unless such fear of the Lord be first planted in their hearts, no prince nor potentate, no state or kingdom can justly pretend to this blessing which Hezekiah's prayers obtained: for he first feared, and then besought the Lord, before the Lord repented of the evil which he had pronounced against him and his people.

Now it is our hope and assurance that God will repent of the evil denounced which makes our fear of him or of his judgments to be a filial, not a slavish fear. For no man can fear God with a true filial fear, but he that apprehends him as a loving Father, and one that is sorry for our afflictions; one that delighteth not in the punishment of his sons or servants, but in their repentance, that they may become capable of his fatherly mercy or lovingkindness.

With thee there is mercy, (saith the psalmist,) *therefore shalt thou be feared.* Why? doth any man fear God's mercies more than his justice? No. This was no part of the psalmist's meaning: we fear his judgments in and for themselves, and as they bring evil upon us. We fear God himself for his mercy; we are afraid to offend him, if we be his children, because he is merciful, and because the greatest evil which any man can procure unto his own soul is to deprive himself of his mercy who is goodness itself, the sole fountain of all the good which can be derived unto us. Or it may be a further part of the psalmist's meaning, that it was our apprehension or belief of his mercy which keepeth our fear, whether of him or of his judgments, within his proper sphere or limits; as if he had said, *With thee, O Lord, there is mercy, therefore shalt thou be feared;* hated thou canst not be by such as apprehend or believe thy mercies; whereas fear of judgments or perpetual punishments, unless it be tempered with hope of mercy, runs out of its wits, and running beyond its bounds always ends in hatred.

It is not possible either for that man not to love God which truly believes that he hath mercy in store for all, or for that man not to hate him, or at least not to occasion others to hate him, which is persuaded that

he hath reserved judgment without mercy to some men as they are men, or that he hath destinated them to inevitable destruction before he gave them life or preservation.

To be thus persuaded argues an uncharitable disposition, as well towards God as towards men: and from both root and branch of this error, from all such heresies, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, good Lord, deliver us, that are thine heritage, thy whole church, especially this land and people.

A TREATISE

CONCERNING

THE SIGNS OF THE TIME,

OR

GOD'S FOREWARNINGS:

CONTAINING

The Sum of some few Sermons delivered partly before the King's Majesty, partly in the Town of Newcastle upon Tyne.

LUKE XIII. 5.

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

THE words contain an emphatical negative, οὐχὶ, λέγω ὑμῖν, and the emphasis of the negative doth infer a vehement affirmative, though conditional or exceptive; *but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Besides the grammatical emphasis or vehemence, the same words are twice repeated by Him who used no tautologies, by Him whose nay was nay, and whose yea was yea, and Amen. The ingemination of the same sentence was from two several occasions; the one given to our Saviour, the other taken by him. The occasion given ye have ver. 1 : *There were present some that told of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.* Who these Galilæans were, and what was their crime, is nowhere

(to my observation) registered in particular; probable it is, that they were the relics of Judas of Galilee his sect, of whom we read, Acts v. 37. This man, as Gamaliel in that place relates, rose up (that is, in our language, did rebel) in the days of the tax enjoined about the time of our Saviour's birth, and drew much people after him; and though he perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed, yet his sect or opinions died not with him: for as Josephus, that great Jewish antiquary, tells us, he left two sons which maintained his doctrine after his death, and 352
these Galilæans here mentioned were it seems their disciples; and their crime, mutiny, or attempt of rebellion.

With what intentions the relaters of these news did interrupt our Saviour in his serious discourse unto his auditors, he best knew. However, *res ipsa includebat dolum.* With what intention soever they came unto him, the relation itself, before such a multitude, was captious; such as would have put a man but ordinarily wise either to silence or upon an exigence. If he should have held his peace, this had been a disparagement to the opinion which the people had of his wisdom; and if he were disposed to reply, there seems a necessity laid upon him either of censuring these Galilæans for notorious transgressors, or of taxing Pilate of extraordinary cruelty. To condemn these miserable men after such dreadful execution, especially before their countrymen, (for such were most of his auditors, Galilæans many of them, perhaps their kinsmen,) had been odious: to have taxed Pilate's person of cruelty, or this his present fact of injustice, had been dangerous; for it was an act of state: and whatsoever private edge or spleen this Roman deputy had against these Galilæans, that was sure to be backed by

public supreme authority. As for Pilate's person, place, or fact, that our Saviour (such was his wisdom) meddles not with; he neither approves nor disallows it. That these Galilæans were grievous transgressors, did justly deserve what they suffered, he denies not. But that they were more heinous sinners than any other Galilæans, which had not suffered the like punishment, that he firmly denies in the 2nd verse; *Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent,* πάντες ὡσαύτως ἀπολεῖσθε, *ye shall all likewise perish.*

This speech is directed to his ordinary auditors, who for the most part were Galilæans, and our Saviour at the time when this news was brought him was not in Judæa nor in Pilate's jurisdiction, but in Galilee or Peræa, which both belonged to Herod's sovereignty.

But these newsmongers were not Galilæans, but inhabitants of Jerusalem; and for this reason he takes occasion to put them in mind of as fearful an accident which had fallen out, though not so lately, yet within their memory, in Jerusalem, admonishing the inhabitants thereof to make better use of it than hitherto they had done, ver. 4: *Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent,* πάντες ὁμοίως ἀπολεῖσθε, *ye shall all likewise perish.*

This ingeminate verdict of our Saviour, first, against the Galileans, secondly, against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as most other of his solemn sentences (if we had the grace, wit, or will, to weigh them aright), admit a double sense or importance, and require a twofold consideration: the one, as they are prophetical

and of more special use; the other, as they are moral, and of general use. We are in the first place to consider these words now read unto you as they are prophetical. For unless we have a true scale of them as they lie under this observation, we shall take their moral meaning either too wide or too strait, and shall continually wander from the meaning of the Holy Ghost in the particular application of them.

But some haply will demand what matter of prophecy, or of prophecy befitting the Prince of prophets, is it, or can it be, thus emphatically to utter, οὐχὶ λέγω 353
ὑμῖν, It is in no case as you think of these Galilæans or inhabitants of Jerusalem, *but, unless one and other of you repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*

Every ordinary minister of God's word may and ought to preach this doctrine daily to his auditors, unless they be much better than in most places they are. For such (for the most part) both priest and people are, that, unless they do repent, they shall die, not the death of the body only, but of the soul. Yea, but many thus die which do not perish, and many may perish, and yet not perish ὡσαύτως or ὁμοίως, after the same manner that those Galilæans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, *or those eighteen of Jerusalem, upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them.* Now our Saviour's meaning is, that as the end of these few particular men was exemplary and disastrous, so should the end of the Galilæan nation and of the inhabitants of Jerusalem without repentance be; a spectacle and astonishment to all the nations of the earth, which should see, hear, and read of it. And to foretell this national disaster so long before was matter of prophecy well befitting the Prince of prophets; a true document that he had the spirit of prophecy, not by measures or minute portions, but

most full and entire; that he was not only *vates futurorum*, or *præteritorum*, but *certus interpres præsentium:* for unto all these points the Spirit of divine prophecy doth respectively reach. Moses did declare himself to be as true a prophet in setting down the history of the creation, and the lives of the patriarchs, as in foretelling what should befall their posterity. So did Daniel as well in retrieving Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which had outflown his own memory, as in giving the undoubted interpretation of it. Our Saviour in this place declares himself to be *vates præteritorum*, in his most infallible recounting that sad accident in Jerusalem without a remembrancer or any record of it then extant. For however the thing itself was well known to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, yet he did not preach upon *carantoes*. The ground of this his heavenly discourse was not *vox populi*, but his own infallible knowledge of both these disasters; and both of them were extraordinary signs or forewarnings unto the Jewish nation, and in particular to the inhabitants of the province of Galilee and city of Jerusalem; yet signs or forewarnings, whose interpretations none besides the Prince of prophets could then have given; and his interpretation of them is in brief this—that Galilee should be the prime seat of that bloody war, and Jerusalem the centre of all those unparalleled calamities, whereat the general signs of the time and these two particular disasters mentioned in my text directly point, and would strike home without speedy repentance.

That both these sad accidents were such as the Latins call *portenta* or *prodigia*, that is, in sacred language, peculiar signs of the time, or forewarnings of greater calamities to follow, we gather from the first words of the chapter, Παρῆσαν δέ τινες, "There were

some present," ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ καιρῷ, *in illo ipso articulo temporis*, "in that very season or nick of time, who told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." What season was that? That point of time wherein he said unto the people, chap. xii. 54, *When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the* 354 *earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? And when the Pharisees with the Sadducees came, tempting and desiring him that he would shew them a sign from heaven*, (as it is Matth. xvi. 1, 2, &c.) *he answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?* And albeit his recited speeches, Luke xii. 54, were directed unto the people or promiscuous multitude then present; yet in that multitude there were (no question) some Scribes which had the prerogative and portion of the firstborn in the title of *hypocrites*.

Now our Saviour's discourse immediately before my text being of the signs of the time, and a tax of his auditors' dulness in not discerning them; this unexpected intersertion of those Galilæans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, whatsoever the newsmongers intended, was indeed no interruption, but rather an illustration of his doctrine; it comes in its right cue; and the relaters of this sad accident serve his turn as fitly as the chirurgeon doth the

physician, by making a visible dissection of that part on which the other makes an anatomy lecture. The implication, or importance of the news, thus suited by Divine Providence unto the point then handled by our Saviour, is in effect as much as if he himself had said unto his auditors; If you want other signs of the time to meditate upon, take these two for your theme, the unusual massacre of the Galilæans, and the disaster of *those eighteen inhabitants of Jerusalem, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them.* These are the first drops of God's displeasure against the nation; but these drops, without repentance, will grow into a current, and the current into a river, and the river swell into a flood, and the flood into an ocean of public woe and tragic miseries.

The prophet Jeremiah long before had taxed their forefathers as more dull and stupid than the reasonless creatures, as the birds of the air, for not discerning or not observing those signs of the time which did foreshew God's judgments upon them, with the causes which did provoke them, Jer. viii. 6, 7: *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle. Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.*

This stupidity or senselessness in man, whether Jew or Gentile, whether Christian or heathen, in thus slighting or neglecting the signs of the time, that is, such portendments or prognostics of God's judgments or calamities, as the very book of nature or of the visible creatures affords, argues the nature, at least the

disposition of men, in whom this stupidity is found, to be farther out of frame than the nature of the birds of the air or beasts of the field: for they commonly foresee unseasonable weather or storm coming, and seek in time for some shelter or refuge, but so do not men for the most part return to God, who is their only refuge, under the shadow of whose wings there is only hope of safety; albeit he daily gives them more pregnant prognostics of wrath ensuing, than the disposition of the air doth unto birds or fowls.

From these circumstances of the season, wherein 355
these news were brought unto our Saviour, the ensuing discourse must take its rise by these degrees; first, of the peculiar signs of times portending unusual calamities, and of their general use; secondly, of the manner how this prophecy was fulfilled upon the whole Jewish nation, according to the scale or model of these two signs upon these few Galilæans and inhabitants of Jerusalem; thirdly, of the moral use or application of both these signs and predictions.

That the Preserver of mankind doth always in one kind or other gently yet seriously forewarn every city or nation of such extraordinary calamities as hang over their heads, and without repentance inevitably fall upon them, there can be no better proof than by induction, that is, by the general agreement of historians, whether sacred, Christian, or heathen, in all ages. Of historians, whose works are entirely extant, or unsuspected to be the authors whose names they bear, Herodotus is the most ancient; and he hath made up the induction to our hands until his own times: *Quoties ingentes sunt eventuræ calamitates vel civitati vel nationi, solent signis prænunciari:* "Extraordinary calamities, whether such as befall cities or peculiar signiories, are always foreshewn by some sign or other."

This author lived before Alexander the Great, but after Cyrus had taken the city of Babylon, and is quoted by Aristotle, who was Alexander's instructor. I refer his instances or ensamples, confirming his former induction of general observation, to a fitter opportunity, divers of them being more paralleled to the signs of the times in my text, than any I have read in any heathen author. In the age next ensuing, the author of the second book of Maccabees (a man of authentic credit for matter of fact, though not of canonical authority for his doctrine or judgment upon matter of fact related by him) hath recorded the like forewarnings, though in another kind, foresignifying the wars that befell the Jewish nation by Antiochus, 2 Maccab. v. 2, 3. To parallel these with the like in every age since that time, would be less painful to an ordinary preacher, than troublesome to his auditors. Machiavel, a man as free from superstition or vain credulity as any other writer that hath been born and bred amongst Christians, out of his own reading and experience hath made the same induction which Herodotus did, but somewhat more full:

Ut causam facile confitebor me ignorare: ita rem ipsam cum ex antiquis, tum novis exemplis agnoscere oportet, et confiteri omnes magnos motus, quicunque aut urbi alieni, aut regioni evenerunt, vel a conjectoribus vel a revelatione aliqua prodigiis aut cœlestibus signis prædici ac prænunciari solere. Machiav. Disput. lib. i. cap. 56.

But besides the induction made by Herodotus (whose works I doubt, but know not, whether Machiavel had read) many other instances he brings out of his own observations and experience.

But some will ask, what credit is to be given to Machiavel, or men of his temper? Little or none (I

must confess) in point of censure or opinion concerning matter of religion or sacred use; but as the testimony of the Jew in matter of fact is the most pregnant proof that we Christians can use against the Jews themselves, or for confirmation of our religion, so Machiavel's testimony in matter of fact of this nature whereof we treat is most authentic against the atheists or men of no religion. For this great politician was so far from being too superstitious or credulous in this kind, that by his writings many have sus- 356
pected him to have been rather irreligious, more inclining to atheism than either to the Christian or Jewish nation; and whatsoever in this kind he hath observed, as he himself confesseth, was in a manner evicted or extorted from him by the evidence of truth. The true cause of such prodigious signs or forewarnings he professes he did not know; and we have reason to believe him in this, because he was ignorant of the right end or use of them. But this, saith he, all we of Florence know, that the coming of Charles the Eighth, French king, with a puissant army, was foretold long before by Jerome Savanorola, and likewise foreshewed by many other signs rife in his times throughout the dukedom of Tuscany. Now this divination of Savanorola was not gathered from any politic observation; for Charles's attempt was in all politic esteem so incredible and rash, that the grave senators of Venice would give no credence unto the first news of his entering into Italy, until one of their ancients, better acquainted (it seems) with that French king's disposition than the rest, told them that he could more easily believe this rash attempt of that French king, than of any of his predecessors. But besides the testimony of Machiavel for this particular, we have the undoubted testimony of Philip de Comines, that grave and religious historian,

who was then agent for the French king in Italy, and relates this prediction from Savaronola's own mouth, with more particulars than Machiavel mentions; for he expressly foretold him of that unexpected success which Charles at his first coming did find; but this he foretold with this proviso or caution, that unless the king his master did faithfully execute the work whereunto the Lord of lords and King of kings had designed him, he would quickly call in his commission, and bring the French armies back again into their own land with disgrace and loss. The event did prove both these parts of this prediction to be most true.

This great alteration of state and wars in Italy, as Machiavel confidently affirms, was likewise portended or foresignified by such apparitions in the air, as the author of the second book of Maccabees in his fifth chapter mentions, that is, by apparitions of great armies of men joining battle over Aretium, a town in Tuscany. The words of the author of the second of Maccabees before cited are these: *And then it happened that through all the city for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen running in the air in cloth of gold, and armed with lances, like a band of soldiers, and troops of horsemen in array, encountering and running one against another, with shaking of shields and multitude of pikes and drawing of swords, and casting of darts, and glitterings of golden ornaments and harness of all sorts; wherefore every man prayed that that apparition might turn to good.*

He instances in another sign or prodigy, well known to all in Florence, which did portend or foresignify the death of Lorenzo de Medices, who laid the first foundation of the present dukedom of Tuscany in his family, being a man who by his wisdom had preserved

all Italy a long time in peace: for a little before his death, the roof of their chief church or temple took fire from heaven, which much defaced it. The banishment of Petrus Soderinus, a great peer and pillar of the state of Florence in his time, and the calamities which ensued thereupon, were likewise foresignified or portended by the burning of their guildhall or senate house by lightning or fire from heaven. These examples he brings from his own knowledge; another he brings out of Livy, of one Æditius, an honest country- 357
man, who was warned and commanded by a voice in the dead of night, more clear and shrill than the voice of man, to tell their magistrates that the Gauls their enemies were coming to be revenged upon the Romans. So he concludes his discourse as he did begin it, that whatsoever might be thought of such conjectures or forewarnings, this is most certain by experience, that some great alterations always follow upon such signs or forewarnings. As for Herodotus, I like his verdict in this kind the better, because he referred this observation of prodigies, or signs of the time, unto the Egyptian nation, which was the most ancient and most remarkable kingdom amongst the heathens. And what reason the Egyptians had to observe these prodigies and signs of the time more than others, both Jews and Christians cannot but know or may remember, seeing God had shewed such signs and wonders in the land of Egypt as had not been shewn in any nation before, such as can scarce be paralleled in any nation since, besides in the destruction of Jerusalem, until the day of judgment, or the signs which shall be given before it come.

Unto matters related by the author of the second book of Maccabees, if not for his own esteem, yet for St. Paul's, or whoever were the author of the Epistle

to the Hebrews, we owe such an historical belief as may ground matters of sacred or canonical use or application, because that sacred author hath given him credit or countenance in his relations of the persecutions of God's people long before his own time, which are not registered by any ancient author now extant besides this author of the second book of Maccabees; 2 Maccab. vii. 7. Heb. xi. 35.

They extend an undoubted truth too far which make canonical scriptures to be the only rule of our belief, as well for matters of fact as for matter of doctrine or use: for some matters of fact, though not related in canonical scriptures, we may and do believe or know as certainly as those matters which are related by sacred historians. We (all of us) as steadfastly believe and know that God hath often visited this land with the plague of pestilence in later years, as we do that he visited the land of Judah in David's time: many of us believe or know that we have been sick, grievously sick; and this we believe and know as firmly as we believe that Hezekiah was sick even unto death and recovered, albeit his sickness, and the plague wherewith Judah was visited in David's time, are both recorded in scriptures, so are not any visitations wherewith the Lord hath visited either ourselves in particular, or this land and people in general.

But though these or the like matters of fact be not expressed in scriptures, which are the rule of our faith, yet are the canonical scriptures the only rule of faith how we ought to demean ourselves when we are either visited in particular, as Hezekiah was, or when God's visitation is more general and public, as it was upon Judah in the reign of David.

But however we may know matters of fact which are present, or which fall out in our times, as un-

doubtedly as we do matters of fact related in scriptures; yet it will be objected, that we may not give the same credit or belief unto any matters of fact done in former times, related by heathen or Christian, by ancient or modern authors, which we do unto all matters of fact which have been registered by canonical writers.

All this is true; yet unto writers, as well heathens 358
as Christians, we may and ought to give, though no sacred esteem or credit, yet an historical or moral belief, as many by profession Christians do not distinctly give unto matters of fact related by sacred writers, or at least unto their censures of them.

If all or most of us could but attain unto such a distinct historical belief of sacred writers as many have of stories related, as well by ancient heathens as by modern Christians, we would be more religious, or less irreligious, than for the most part we are.

Briefly, though to believe as much concerning the signs of the times as the heathens did, though to make as good or better use of them than they did, be not sufficient to acquit us from ruin and destruction foresignified; yet not to believe as much as they did, not to make so good use as they did, not to be so much affected with them as they were, is enough, and more than enough, to condemn us, enough to bring that ruin or calamity which they portend or foresignify inevitably and in full measure upon us.

Unto these observations of Herodotus and Machiavel, I only add this one, that the greater the alterations or calamities be, which are thus foresignified or portended, the greater commonly and more strange the prodigies be which foresignify them: the more sudden the blow, or the fewer the forewarnings be, the more express and punctual they are. Two instances for this

present shall suffice, exhibited a little before or in the time wherein Machiavel wrote; both forewarnings were given *viva voce*, by the voice of men, but of men which no man present knew, either whence they were, or whither they went after the delivery of their message.

The one unto James the Fourth, then lord and king of our now sister nation. The apparition and message was so strange, that the learned historian from whom I have it professeth he should hardly have believed it, unless he had heard it from a man far from lying and coining of news, namely, from sir David Lindsey, that famous king at arms and knight of the mount.

Hac belli denuntiatione in Scotiam, prolata dum ad exercitum proficiscens rex Limnuchi vespertinas in æde sacra cantiones (ut tum moris erat) audit; senex quidam ingressus, capillo in rufum flavescente, ac in humeros promisso, fronte in calviciem glabro capite nudo, veste longiuscula cyanei coloris amictus, ac linteo cinctus, cætero aspectu venerabilis, is regem quærens per turbam obstantium penetrat; ubi ad eum accessit rustica quidam simplicitate, super solium, in quo rex sedebat innixus, Rex, inquit, ego ad te sum missu, ut te admoneam ne quo instituisti progrediaris, quam admonitionem si neglexeris, non erit e re tua nec eorum qui te comitabuntur: præterea præmonere sum jussus, ne mulierum familiaritate, consuetudine, ac consilio utaris, secus vero si facies et damno et ignominiæ tibi res erit. Hæc locutus turbæ sese immiscuit: nec cum, præcipibus finitis, rex eum requireret, usquam comparuit: quod eo magis mirum est visum, quod eorum qui proprius astiterant atque eum observabant, avidi ex eo multa sciscitandi, nemo ejus discessum senserat. In iis fuit David Lindesis,

montanus; homo spectatæ fidei et probitatis, nec a literarum studiis alienus, et cujus totus vitæ tenor longissime a mentiendo aberat, a quo nisi ego hæc, uti tradii, accepissem, ut vulgatam vanis rumoribus fabulam, omissurus eram.

And it is no wonder if this forewarning were so unusual and strange, seeing the calamity which came through the neglect of it was so great, as this famous 359 herald in his writings complains it could not be paralleled in any nation besides the Egyptian, for the loss of the prince and so many nobles in one day: but though the blow was for the present terrible, yet, God be praised, the wound was not incurable; *forsan et has venturus amor præmiserat iras.* The wound or breach was at that time the wider, that the cure or close of it might be the sweeter; and let him perish that seeks any other use of the ancient foehoods betwixt these two neighbouring nations, than the settling of such love and peace betwixt them as becometh dearest sisters. Let no other emulation possess nobility, gentry, or commonalty of either kingdom, besides true zeal in God's service, and loyal obedience to his vicegerent, their joint lord and sovereign.

If the former relation of that famous knight and herald might seem strange to any for the present, their diffidence or incredulity might have been sufficiently convinced by an apparition and forewarning far more strange, exhibited within twelve or thirteen years after unto the state or court of Hungary.

"The king being at dinner, the gates of his castle being shut, (as the custom was,) a certain ghost, in form and shape of a man, evil favoured, with crooked legs, came halting, and knocks at the gate, and with a loud shrill voice desired to speak with the king, to acquaint him with things which nearly concerned

both the good of himself and of the kingdom. His speeches at first being not heard by the guard who were at the gate (as it is the use in princes' courts), he cried louder, and with a horrible voice demanded again whether they gave the king notice thereof. In the end, certain of the company being moved by the importunity of this deformed ghost, they demanded of him what he would have; but he replying said, 'he would not reveal his secrets to any but the king.' This message was presently carried to the king, who understanding thereof sent unto him one of his servants, in the best and richest apparel, and one who was next himself, feigning that he was the king, commanding him to inquire what this fellow would say. This messenger coming before the ghost, and asking him in private what secret he would impart unto him, the other denying that he was king, (but came disguised to abuse him,) with a high and loud voice he said, 'that since the king would not hear him, he should shortly perish.' And so shortly he did, with the loss of a great part of the kingdom of Hungary, not recovered by Christians to this day[e]."

But it is time to come to the use which the heathens did and the Christians ought to make of the special signs or forewarnings, of what kind soever they be. Of the heathens, some in most ages did utterly contemn or scorn all presage from the signs of the time; some, not so ill disposed, did slight them; others took them into serious consideration, but for the most part made no right use of them, did grossly err either in practice or opinion. The ancient Romans had an accustomed presage of success in battle by the eating of birds kept for that purpose. This kind of presage

[e] Amongst other writers of those times, see that noble French historian, Martin Fumée, lord of Genillè. Hist. Hung. l. 1. p. 32.

was so far contemned by Claudius Pulcher, general for the Romans in the first Punic war, that when the soothsayers had dissuaded him from giving battle to the Carthaginians that day, because the birds would not eat, he commanded them to be cast into the sea, to see if they would drink or no: but the ill success, which was conceived to follow upon this contempt, did cause the senate to call in his commission, and choose another general in his place. Howbeit this kind of 360
presage, I take it, was no sign of the time, or forewarning exhibited by the true God, but rather affected by superstitious men.

However, the contempt or scorn of superstition or blind devotion, unless it spring from a sincere and wellrooted love to true religion, is much worse than superstitious, than idolatrous practices. Many instances are extant in unsuspected authors, that the irreligious contemners or scorners of false gods, have been remarkably plagued, not by those supposed gods whose service they neglected, but by the true and only God, who is the just revenger, as well of atheism and irreligion, as of superstition and idolatry.

But the emperor Vespasian, though an heathen, was in his way devoutly religious, and though no contemner, yet a slighter of the prodigies and signs of the time. For when amongst other presages remarkable of his death, notice was given him of a comet which then appeared, he bid the relaters deliver this message to the king of Parthia, *Ille comatus est, ego autem calvus;* seeing the king of Parthia did wear long hair, it was most likely that this blazing star, or *crinita stella,* as the Romans call it, should portend his death, rather than the emperor Vespasian's, who was bald. But the course of destiny, as the heathens upon this observed, could not be diverted by jerks of wit, for

Vespasian died before the extinction of this comet, and the king of Parthia outlived both: Vespasian perhaps might have lived the longer, if upon these summons or forewarnings he had betaken himself to his prayers, as Hezekiah in like case did, or said in his heart unto the Divine Power, which gave him those summons, as David in like case did, *Behold, here am I, do with me as it seemeth good in thy eyes.*

But error in opinion concerning the use of these forewarnings was usual to the more ingenious and devoutest sort of heathens, which did carefully regard them. Thus far they are to be commended, in that they thought these forewarnings to be sent by the gods, or divine powers, as tokens or pledges of their good-will towards men; some of them expressly say they were sent from the God, not from the gods, from *cœleste numen*, not from *cœlestia numina*, "from the power of heaven, not from heavenly powers." Wherein did these men fail or err? In this specially; that albeit they did not suspect the Divine Power, either of hatred or want of good-will towards men, yet they thought fate and destiny were stronger than this Divine Power; that the miserable calamity and success which did commonly ensue upon such forewarnings could by no means possible be either prevented or averted: hence was that or the like exclamation,

> Heu vani monitus, frustraque morantia parcas
> Prodigia; heu superi fatis certasse minores[f].

But this was the speech of a poet, and poets take liberty to be passionate in expressing the dispositions or opinions of men in their times. Yet a most sober, most ingenuous Roman writer, is more express to this purpose in prose. *Cn. Etiam Pompeium Jupiter omni-*

[f] Silius Italicus.

potens abunde monuerat, nec cum C. Cæsare ultimam belli fortunam experiri contenderit [g].

He speaks not of the gods in general, but of one God, whom he characters under the style of Omnipotency, who did forewarn Pompey the Great, not 361
sufficiently only, but abundantly, not to hazard his fortunes upon a battle to be determined on one day. The forewarnings which he there relates were extraordinary and prodigious; some of them portended Pompey's overthrow, others Cæsar's victory. His verdict or censure upon them is briefly this; they were such *a quibus appareret cœleste numen et Cæsaris gloriæ favisse, et Pompeii errorem inhibere voluisse.*

But if this heavenly power were willing to inhibit Pompey's error, how came it to pass that it was not inhibited? This is all the reason he could give: *Invictæ leges necessitatis, pectus alioqui ab amentia remotum, prodigia ista justa æstimatione perpendere passæ non sunt:* "The irresistible laws of necessity would not suffer this great and otherwise most prudent general to weigh these forewarnings aright."

But if this Jupiter, or heavenly power, were, as he instyles him, omnipotent, and willing withal, as he confesseth, to inhibit Pompey's error at this very time, what law, what necessity, or what laws of necessity could resist or prohibit the execution of his will? These immutable laws of necessity, if any such there were, might be more truly styled omnipotent than Jupiter, or that great God who gives laws to man and angels: but it was the want of true logic which did occasion this error or ill expression in this heathen writer, as it had done and doth the like in the Stoicks. The transposing only of one word, or placing of one

g Valerius Maximus.

point aright, without alteration of any syllable, or its signification, would make this heathen's opinion and expression of himself exactly paralleled to the rule of faith.

When he saith, *Invictæ leges necessitatis*, &c. "would not suffer Pompey to lay these forwarnings to heart," he contradicts himself and the truth of Divine omnipotent power. Whereas if he had said, 'the invincible laws of necessity did suffer Pompey not to lay these forewarnings to heart,' he had spoken like a Christian. For there can be no other invincible law of necessity besides the irresistible will of the one omnipotent God; and that is a law absolutely invincible and most irresistible, and yet a law which admits a liberty of choice in the parties subject to it, or a law for the most part disjunctive. It was the irresistible will of God that Pompey should have sufficient, or, as this author speaks, abundant warning to correct his error, or to abate his high spirit or pride of heart, and yet it was one and the same irresistible will of one and the same God, that these forewarnings, how prodigious soever, should not necessitate his will, or enforce relentance upon his present resolution.

No matter of fact or signs of the time can be more infallible prognostics of calamities foresignified by them, than these signs of the time which it pleased our Saviour to interpret. No prophecy or prediction, though uttered by an angel from heaven, can induce a greater necessity, or argue a more inevitable futurition of things so foretold, than the express prediction, or prophecy, of the Son of God himself.

Though here or elsewhere he often foretold the destruction of Galilee and Jerusalem, yet was not the destruction of either of them from the date of this prophecy absolutely necessary or inevitable, but neces-

sary only upon supposition, or conditionally necessary —*Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Yea, but this proposition might be true, 'If they did repent, they should not perish.' But this doth not argue their repentance to have been possible: for *Hypothetica propositio* (as they say) *nihil ponit in esse:* this pro- 362
position would be true, though in a beggar's mouth, 'If I had ten thousand pound, I should be a rich man;' yet the truth of this proposition puts no money in his purse.

But he that would apply this logic rule unto our Saviour's speech in my text doth either jeer our Saviour or make him to be a jeerer of the sons of affliction; which latter, of two evils, is the worse; for wheresoever the contract or covenant is serious, or where the bond or grant is real and legal, the condition must be facible.

The prince or judge that would grant or promise a malefactor, suppose a manslayer, his life upon condition or proviso that he should restore the party whom he had slain to life again, would be thought rather to mock him than shew mercy to him, and to do himself and his authority more wrong than the other good.

Solomon did not mock Shimei when he gave him life upon this condition, that he should keep himself within the confines of Jerusalem. This condition, though not performed by Shimei, was facible, and the breach of it did bring death upon Shimei.

Every condition or promise, if it be serious, *præsupponit aliquid in esse,* "presupposeth some estate in being." As when our Saviour saith, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,* this exception or condition presupposeth an estate in sin, yet an estate mutable. It presupposeth these men were truly liable to

destruction threatened; but it presupposeth withal that the door of life and salvation, though now but narrow, was not utterly shut against them; that as yet it was called *to-day* with them; yea that after this time there was a season wherein this Son of God did call them to repentance, *when he beheld the city, and wept over it; O that thou hadst known in this thy day*, &c. After they had cast him off from being king over them, and exempted themselves from his wonted special protection, yet he ceaseth not to pray for them, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

But here some, who think it part of their office to fend off God's intended mercies from such as they have marked for reprobates, will tell you, that our Saviour did then pray, not for the Jews, but for the Roman soldiers: yet Roman soldiers they were not, but Jews of the worst condition, which stoned the blessed martyr Stephen to death, and yet he prayed, *Lord, lay not this sin unto their charge:* and it will be no sin in us to think that the dying disciple did learn this extraordinary charity from his dying Master.

Now if either Master or disciple had known the destruction which hanged over this people's head to have been at that time altogether inevitable, neither of them would or might have prayed for them, or against the plague which in the issue fell upon them: for it was never lawful for the prophets, nor is it for any man living this day, to pray for any people or person, in case they infallibly know that they are utterly cast off by God, or left in a state impenitible.

As for the destruction here threatened against Galilee and Jerusalem, though at this time truly evitable, yet it became less evitable every day than other, for almost forty years, by their continual perseverance in special sins; and their progression in sin without

relentance was occasioned by the neglect of the signs of the time, or the forewarnings which God had given them for their good.

No public plagues or calamities, whether foresignified by such signs as these in my text, or punctually foretold by God's prophets, or by his Son the Prince of 363
prophets, become inevitable, unless it be by contempt or neglect of forewarnings given, or by deeming all events to be inevitable because they are foresignified or foretold by God himself, or by his ambassadors.

It is true sometimes, that the very inevitability of ensuing calamities is either expressly foretold or foresignified; but such presignifications or predictions can be no forewarnings, but rather peremptory denunciations of some irreversible sentence or doom after warnings given, be they more or fewer.

To scorn or neglect forewarnings given is a symptom of hardness of heart and contempt of God's word. To think all calamities are inevitable which are foretold or foresignified, or of which God himself hath given forewarnings, is a branch of false doctrine, or an heresy sometimes adjudged by the lawmakers of this land so capital, that they did exempt the maintainers of it (which were then the sect of the anabaptists) from all benefit of the king's royal pardon, as is apparent from the general pardon of the thirty-second year of king Henry the Eighth: but by what constitutions of the visible church of England (which then was) the error of such men as thought nothing could fall out otherwise than it doth was condemned for an heresy, or by what parliamentary law it was adjudged to be a capital heresy uncapable of pardon, or whether such ecclesiastical constitutions or municipal laws as were then in force have been since by like authority repealed, or antiquated by disuse or discontinuance of

practice, are points without the limits of my profession, and besides my intention either to determine or farther inquire after in this place. Therefore, leaving these points with all submission to the learned professors or interpreters of laws ecclesiastical or municipal, the next inquiry must be of the manner how this prophecy of our Saviour, and the signs of the time which he did prophetically interpret, were accomplished.

364 *Of the several sorts of Divine Forewarnings.*

THE manner of God's forewarning by matter of fact, or other visible signs, is so various, that it cannot be comprehended by art or observation. Sometimes he forewarns by signs in the sun and moon, sometimes by apparitions in the air, sometimes by monstrous births; sometimes he makes the murrain of cattle, or mortality of beasts of the field or birds of the air, to be forerunners of plagues or pestilence unto men. Sometimes he forewarns men (as we say) in kind, and gives them a touch of public ruin, or desolation ensuing, without repentance, by the sudden disasters of some few men or children in the same nation. So Herodotus[h] tells us, that before the desolation of the people of Chios, these strange signs did happen. *Sed videlicet quoties, &c. ut supra. Etenim Chiis ante hanc cladem ingentia signa contigerant: unum, quod ex choro centum juvenum, quos miserant Delphos, duo omnino rediere, nonaginta octo pestilentia absumptis: alterum, quod sub idem tempus, paulo ante navalem pugnam, tectum supra pueros litteras discentes corruit, ita ut ex cen-*

[h] Lib. vi. cap. 216.

tum viginti pueris unus omnino evaserit. Hæc eis signa Deus præmonstravit; post hæc excepit pugna navalis, quæ civitatem in genua dejecit. Accessit ad cladem navalis pugnæ Histiæus cum Lesbiis, qui Chios jam exhaustos facile ad excidium deduxit. The signs were two: "One, that of a hundred young men whom they had sent to Delphos two only returned, the rest being consumed by pestilence: another, but a little after the same time, before the loss of their navy and mariners by sea, the roof of the schoolhouse did fall so suddenly, that of an hundred and twenty children, but one escaped with life. And these signs (as he conceives) God did give them of that great disaster which they had by sea, which brought the city first upon her knees, and after to that utter ruin and desolation, which the Lesbians in their weakness did bring upon both city and people."

These forewarnings, as before was intimated, run parallel with these two in my former text, the fulfilling of which, as also of the parable uttered by our Saviour in the words immediately following, come now to be discussed.

365 LUKE XIII. 6—9.

He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and he found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

THESE words are as an appendix of our Saviour's precedent discourse, concerning such signs of the time as did portend or foresignify the utter ruin of the Jewish nation, and of the visible church planted in it. How peremptory soever the forewarnings were, how infallible soever he was in his predictions of their ruin, yet both were subject to this exception or condition, *Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* The use or importance of the parable was, to admonish them that these forewarnings or signs of the time which God did give them, whether by the express words of this great Prophet, which was then amongst them, or by strange matters of fact legible in the books of the visible creatures, were not to continue *in infinitum;* they had their period set before all times, from eternity. And however it is elsewhere said, that *at what time soever a sinner doth repent him from the bottom of his heart, I will put all his wickedness out of my remembrance;* yet it is nowhere said, that sinners may

repent them at what time they will, or find the just fruits of such repentance as they perform. But as there is an indefinite or long time within which it is possible for sinners to repent, and a promise universal that at what time soever within this limited time sinners do repent their prayers and supplications shall be heard; so there is a peremptory day set to all nations respectively, after which there is no access by true repentance, no entrance by such repentance as they tender under temporal safety. *To-day* (saith the psalmist) *if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved, and saw my works forty years: wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their hearts, and have not known my ways: so I sware in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.* Heb. iii. 7—11. Psalm xcv. 7—11.

The meaning of the psalmist in that place is more fully and plainly expressed by our Saviour, vv. 24, 25 of this chapter, in his answer to that question, *Lord, are there few that shall be saved? And he said unto* 366 *them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.* But to what end should they strive to enter in at that gate at which they are not able to enter? Shall we say, that albeit they that strive to enter be not able of themselves, yet it is possible for them to enter in by God's assistance? or that albeit they are not able to do any thing possible that may merit their entrance, yet they may do somewhat, which being done, God will make the entrance possible to them, and enable them to enter in? This answer in some other cases is most true, yet not in this; it can no way satisfy the question proposed unto our Saviour, it

is no way pertinent to the meaning of this parable, concerning entering in at the strait gate, or this parable of the unfruitful fig tree. It is at some times, at many times, possible for all that hear the word to become obedient to the word heard, and by this obedience to enter in at the strait gate. But it is not possible for any to enter in at it after they have sometimes contemptuously, or oftentimes carelessly, omitted the opportunity which God had offered them for their easy entrance into it, or passage through it. The gate is not so strait, but that all men which have heard of it may enter in at it whilst it is open, so they seek to enter in at it in order, not tumultuously: but after this gate is shut, none can enter, though many seek to enter. So our Saviour instructs us in the 25th ver. of this chapter: *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are.* This is the general end and scope of the parable in my text, and of the parable of the foolish virgins. For the more clear explication of this parable's particular contents, ye are in the first place to know the meaning of the single terms: as, first, who is in special meant by the certain man which had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; secondly, who is in special meant by the dresser of this vineyard; thirdly, what is meant by the fig tree planted in it; lastly, what is meant by the three years, wherein fruit was by the owner expected, and the fourth year wherein the dresser of the vineyard did petition for the sparing of it upon further trial.

The owner of the vineyard, and of the fig tree planted in it, as best interpreters agree, doth represent

God the Father, or first person in Trinity: he it is that exacts satisfaction for all sins committed against the Deity, or Divine Nature; and he it is which demands fruit of whatsoever the Divine Nature hath planted; that is, thankfulness of man in special for his benefits bestowed upon him, but specially of his church wheresoever planted. By the dresser of the vineyard, ye are to understand the Son of God, or second person in Trinity: for he it is which took our nature upon him, to till and dress it for his Father's service; and that portion of our nature which he took upon him is as the root or stem to all the residue which shall be freed from cursing: so our Saviour tells us, *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,* or the owner of the vine. It is again the Son of God, or second person in Trinity, which doth mediate betwixt God and man, and by his mediation and intercession our first parents (the whole nature of man) was reprieved from death. By his mediation and intercession, the execution of God's dreadful and exemplary judgments upon the seed of Jacob, or people 367
of Israel, was for many ages deferred, though in some part executed upon them in every age, but never fully executed upon the nation until their contemptuous neglect of these forewarnings. By the fig tree planted in the vineyard, you are to understand the kingdom of Judah, or the church of the Jews, as they stood affected for this present. For in respect of God's chosen people then living on earth, or of that one holy catholic church which was then in planting, and was afterwards to be propagated throughout the world, the Jewish church or synagogue then flourishing was but as a fig tree planted in a vineyard, but as one fig tree for quantity, and a most unfruitful one for quality, in respect of the charges, care, and pains, which had been

bestowed upon it, and of the special care which the dresser of the vineyard had taken of it.

By the three years wherein fruit was expected from the fig tree, but not yielded, we are in the historical, literal, or punctual sense, to understand the three years of our Saviour's prophetical function here on earth, which were before this time complete and ended. By the fourth year, wherein the fig tree was permitted to grow upon further trial, we are to understand the year current wherein this parable was uttered, in the midst of which year our Saviour was consecrated here on earth to his sacerdotal or priestly function, and forty days after his consecration admitted to exercise this function in his heavenly sanctuary.

But here it may be demanded why this fig tree, that is, the Jewish church, was permitted to stand after this fourth year was ended, since it continued this year more unfruitful than the former; for it is imported in the parable, that unless it did bear fruit within this fourth year it was to be cut down: to this demand we answer, that the meaning of the parable is not that this fig tree instantly was to be cut down at the fourth year's end, but that the dresser of the vineyard would not entreat the owner any longer for it in such manner as he had done before, but would leave it wholly to his wisdom how it should be disposed of, or in what time or by what degrees it was to be cut down: true it is, that it was not utterly cut down at this fourth year's end, for the church and the commonweal of the Jews, represented by the fig tree, did continue almost forty years after this fourth year ended, but stood like a tree or stem of a tree marked to be felled. There did not pass one year of forty wherein it did not receive some chops or deep incision in the root or stem, not one year wherein it was not despoiled of some principal

branches; and during this time the Son of God, here represented by the dresser of the vineyard, stood as a spectator, made no intercession for it: for after this people had rejected him from being their king and protector, God's fearful judgments, often threatened and denounced against it, took their ordinary process without any prohibition.

This church or people were not to expect any extraordinary favour, or more favourable signs than other nations had; yet signs they had many of their miserable ruin and desolation of their country, which they might have observed, which if they had observed but in such measure and manner as many heathens did the like, they might have been acquitted *a tanto*, though not *a toto;* their ruin and destruction, after it became in a manner necessary, was not necessarily decreed to be so inevitable as by their own stubbornness they made it in the issue. Thus much in general of the sense and meaning of the owner of the vineyard 368 and the dresser of it, of the fig tree and of the three years wherein it continued fruitless, and of the fourth year wherein it was to be cut down.

But as for the fig tree, and the years wherein it was permitted to stand, besides the former punctual or historical sense, they have an exemplary or indefinite sense: that which is fore-prophesied of this particular fig tree, or church of the Jews, holds true in proportion of every particular visible church on earth: every one of them have their several forewarnings or appointed times for bringing forth fruit, within which time if they do not repent they are exempted from our Saviour's special protection, and left open to the ordinary process of God's judgments, as this particular fig tree was. This is the only difference, that the forewarnings of other churches and nations are not in

respect of the time so express, so determinate and punctual as this fig tree was: now are they marked to the fall by the selfsame degrees that this fig tree was; the time of their fall and ruin after such forewarnings is not so determinate, in respect of us, as the time of Jerusalem's and Judah's ruin after our Saviour's death and resurrection were: for the time of their ruin was both foretold by the prophets and prefigured by matter of fact; as by their fore-elders' wandering forty years in the wilderness, and by the forty days which after our Saviour's resurrection were given them to bethink themselves better, and to make their peace with God, as the Ninevites did upon forewarning giving them by Jonas. But leaving these punctual or special forewarnings, we are to follow the forewarnings here mentioned in the 3rd and 4th verses of this chapter, with the like general signs of times ensuing.

The province of Galilee had its forewarning in the massacre of these Galilæans, whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices: the inhabitants of Jerusalem had their particular forewarning likewise in the lamentable disaster of *those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell.*

These Galilæans (were they many or few) did perish in Jerusalem, and their disaster for this reason was more publick, such as the whole nation of the Jews could not but take notice of; so that both signs put together, with the circumstances of time and place wherein they happened, did portend that the utter ruin of the whole nation should be in Jerusalem.

It might be true in part which the chief priests and Pharisees had observed, John vii. 52, *Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.* Nor was our Saviour, to whom they apply this observation in particular, a Galilæan by birth, but a neighbour-born unto

Jerusalem; for he was born in Bethlehem the city of David. But at the time of this great Prophet's birth, who was to falsify their observation in respect of future times, (for he made Peter, John, and James, and other Galilæans, more than prophets,) there arose a seditious sect in Galilee, which did first oppose the payment of tribute unto Cæsar; and all the opposition which this rebellious people made against the Roman empire took its original from Judas the Gaulonite and his sons. And as Galilee was the beginning of woe unto Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, so it was the first in the plagues and woes here denounced: for Vespasian being sent to quell this rebellion made his first invasion upon Galilee, and took in all the cities and principal towns within that province before he made any assault upon Jerusalem or other cities of Judah.

The number of Galilæans which perished in that 369
war was so great, that I should hardly believe Josephus's relations of them, unless our Saviour had foretold this calamity was to be national and universal; for all were to perish besides such as did in time repent, which (God wot) were but a few.

But had those Galilæans no signs of the times besides these forewarnings in my text to dissuade them from that desperate war? Yes, signs they had many and most pregnant, which did verify the literal meaning of our Saviour's prophecy; signs abundant to instruct them that the Lord had appointed the Romans to rule over them; and these signs they had partly before, partly after Vespasian's coming to manage the war on the Romans' part against them.

King Agrippa, of whom we read Acts xxvi, in that excellent oration set down by Josephus in his second book and sixteenth chapter, did forewarn them more like a prophet than a politician; but these forewarn-

ings concerned the whole nation as much as they did Galilee. After the invasion made upon Galilee by Vespasian, Josephus himself, who wrote the history of those wars in which he had been a principal agent, took warning by the visible signs of the time to yield himself to the Romans upon the taking of Iotopata: but a more fearful forewarning they had in the second taking of Joppa, whither the Galilæans had fled in great abundance, hoping at least to have escaped the Romans' forces by ships, if they were not able to defend themselves by land: but they found the wind and weather to fight more bitterly against them than the Romans had done: the tempest did drive them from the sea, and the Romans from the city: some were swallowed by the waves; some killed themselves for fear of being drowned; many were dashed against the rocks, so that the sea was bloody, and all the shore was covered with dead bodies: such as escaped the sea were killed by the Romans: four thousand two hundred dead bodies were cast upon the shore: lib. iii. cap. 15. Did the rest of the Galilæans take warning by these men's disaster, or by the destruction of this and other cities, and the general desolation of their country? They did in part, but to no purpose: they saw it was in vain to defend the cities of Galilee; but even the desperate estate hereof they took as a sign of the time, or as a watchword to fortify Jerusalem, the chief city and metropolis of their nation: this was the city which the Lord had chosen amongst all the cities of Israel to place his name there; and God, they thought, was bound in honour to defend his chosen city. Out of this persuasion all the men of war that were left in Galilee, and in other places overrun by Vespasian, did repair unto Jerusalem, and in the issue of this resolution they fulfilled that which

our Saviour had foretold, that not only the Galilæans, but the inhabitants of Jerusalem should perish.

Had those Galilæans, after despair of defending their own cities or strong holds, or after they saw Vespasian's army bent against Jerusalem, fled, as our Saviour admonished his followers, into the mountains, or dispersed themselves amongst other nations, they might have escaped that butchery which the Romans practised upon them, and they upon others of their own nation: and unless they and others of their own nation, contrary to our Saviour's admonition, had flocked unto Jerusalem, (after they had seen it begirt with the Roman forces,) the burgesses or inhabitants of that famous city had submitted themselves unto the Ro- 370
mans, who were ready to give them better quarter, than now one Christian nation will upon like occasion give another. But the inhabitants of that city being overcrowded with the multitude which daily flocked unto them, and which they admitted to be partakers with them of the legal sacrifices, they became partakers of that vengeance which still pursued the seditious, what place soever they made choice of for their refuge. Thus, by neglecting or contemning the signs of the time which our Saviour had given them, the greater part of that nation, more than five to one of such as were then ready to bear arms, were first shut up in Jerusalem, as in a prison, or as so many fatted beasts in a market; the temple afterwards becoming as the slaughterhouse or shambles. To recount all the miseries which they suffered in the city and in the temple, by the famine and by the sword, and by the infection of dead corpses, which had no other grave besides the open streets, the temple, and their houses, would be a labour infinite and superfluous for this place, seeing they are so fully and so pathetically re-

lated by Josephus, whom God had appointed as the fittest man to keep the register of them; and you may at your best leisure, without any fee, peruse his records, now more common in our English language than the records or chronicles of our own nation: and so no doubt it was God's will to have them, that our nation might take example or instructions by them, whom they more concern than they do any nation since they were first written by him. My present aim or level directs me only to observe the fulfilling of our Saviour's words in my text, and the accomplishment of those signs of the time which the owner of this vineyard did give unto this people, after that the dresser of it (that was our Saviour) had given over his special protection of them, and left them to the ordinary course of his Father's justice.

The blood of those Galilæans whom Pilate slew did but make a mixture with the blood of the sacrifices which they offered; and in this mixture we do not read that the blood of these seditious men was predominant, or that it was a mixture of the blood of men and beasts *ad pondus*, or in equal measure: but after Jerusalem was besieged by the Roman army, Josephus, who relates only the matter of fact, without any reference to the prediction of our Saviour in this place, doth tell us that the altar did swim with the blood of men, the blood of Galilæans as well as of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in greater abundance than at any time it had done with the blood of beasts. The blood of beasts, or of legal sacrifices, whilst they were legally offered, that is, whilst the law was in force, was an infallible sign unto this people that God would spare their persons and accept of their commutation, that is, of the blood of beasts in lieu of the blood of men, which he might at all times have justly exacted: but

when the blood of men about the altar or courts of the temple was shed in greater abundance, and that by men of Jewish progeny, than the blood of beasts had been; this was a sign, and a fearful one, that the righteous Lord would no longer accept of legal sacrifices, but did require the blood of those men who had abused the legal sacrifices, not as a means to pacify his wrath or to defer their deserved punishment, as the blood of beasts in former time had done, but rather as an infallible sign that this was the time appointed for taking full vengeance of all the righteous blood which they or their forefathers had shed in this holy city: or, 371
to use our Saviour's words, Luke xi. 50, 51, *that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, might be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.*

But had this people no other forewarnings to desist from this desperate war after Jerusalem was besieged by Vespasian, besides these prophetical forewarnings of our Saviour? Yes: though the book of the law and prophets were now sealed up, that they could not read or understand the meaning of it; though our Saviour's forewarnings were quite forgotten, or not observed by them, yet the book of the visible creatures was still legible; they wanted not prodigies, or other remarkable signs of the time, which testified God's special providence in directing all occurrences for the good of the Romans and for their destruction. And these signs were observed even by the heathens, and others, which had no true knowledge of Christ or of his prophecies. A remarkable one was pressed upon them by Josephus, in his oration unto them: "The fountains

which before gave you no water, yield it to Titus in great abundance. You know that before his coming the fountains without the city and Siloe were so dried up, that water was sold by measure; yet now they flow so plentifully, that they do not only serve all the armies, and their cattle also, but besides that, do water all the gardens about[i]."

It is a short but a remarkable observation which the same author there makes: "Vespasian," saith he, "so gained by warring against us, that he hath hereby got the whole empire." This was a pregnant sign of the time; for indeed the manner how the Roman empire did within the space of sixteen months devolve from Nero upon Galba, from Galba upon Otho, from Otho upon Vitellius, rather to crush them than to advance them; and the manner again how the same empire, after this long tumble, did quietly settle under Vespasian and his sons, did abundantly testify even unto the natural moral man, that this resolution was wrought by the special hand of God. Every sober or civil man, which had any notion of the Divine Providence, might have clearly gathered, that albeit Nero had appointed Vespasian general against the Jewish nation, yet it was the Lord of lords and King of kings which had directed and appointed Nero thus to make this choice, and did confirm it. He again in those times which had perused the prophecies might have collected, that the same Lord of lords which gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar, for his diligent service against the proud city of Tyre, had now reserved the Roman empire for Vespasian, as his pay or stipend for the faithful service which he had done him in his wars against Galilee and Judea.

[i] Lib. vi. cap. 11. pag. 930. G.

The character which the Roman historians have put upon Galba was brief, but pithy; *dignus imperio nisi imperasset*, "that he was in all men's judgments worthy the empire, if he had not taken it upon him." And Vespasian himself, who afterwards enjoyed the empire, did esteem Galba worthy of it. Now that Galba enjoyed it, or his life after he was chosen emperor, so short a while as he did, that was not above seven months and seven days, this we may say was by the special appointment of the Lord, to the end that Titus, being far on his way towards Rome to present his father's service and his own unto Galba, might upon the unexpected news of Galba's death turn back again into Judæa, to manage the battles of 372
the Lord against Jerusalem, and other cities of the province, in his father's absence, who in the interim was chosen emperor. And this war Titus managed with as great valour and alacrity as could be expected of any Roman then living, and yet with greater wisdom and clemency. A man he was of such a temper and disposition, that we may think he was either chosen or fitted by the Maker of all men for this purpose, specially that the obstinate Jews, and all the world besides, might have a visible model or character of his own former dealing with this stubborn people.

When we read the sacred story, 2 Chron. xxvi, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah concerning the miserable massacre of both priests and people, of young and old, and the utter destruction of both city and temple by Nebuchadnezzar, we cannot much wonder at such cruelty as was then practised by a barbarous and cruel tyrant, always willing to do his worst against all that did oppose him. But that these historical expressions of Jerusalem's misery under Nebuchadnezzar, a pat-

tern of tyrants, should become true prophecies, that the miseries of this people at that time should be but as prodigious signs or portendment of far greater miseries under the Roman Titus, the flower of courtesy, and mirror of affability amongst princes; this points at somewhat extraordinary, at somewhat worthy of admiration. This visible type or shadow hath a body answerable unto it. Titus is the type or shadow, than whom no man that day living could have been more unwilling either to practise cruelty upon any private man, or to bring ruin upon any city or nation; and yet the Jewish nation, and Jerusalem the queen of cities, did suffer far greater misery under him, than any city or nation of the world besides did ever suffer under the most bloody tyrant into whose hands the Lord had given them. But how unwilling soever he was to practise cruelty, or suffer it to be practised by others under him, yet he was bound to practise the discipline of war, not to stain either his own worth or the majesty of the Roman empire by prostituting his native clemency unto desperate stubborn rebels.

That of the prophet Hosea was never more truly verified, never more exactly fulfilled in any generation of this people, than it was in this last: *Perditio tua ex te o Israel, salus ex me.* That this city and temple was spared so long, that this people had so large a time for repentance, this was altogether from God, *who willeth not the death of him that dies;* and to testify this, *amor benevolentiæ*, this good will of his unto them, as they were men, even unto the last end, and after they had broken off *amorem amicitiæ*, "the love of friendship," he sends for a general against them, not a Vitellius, but a Titus, a man, *quoad hæc*, or in this particular, after his own heart, a man as it were composed of princely valour and clemency; that

in the issue, the city, the temple, and people perished, after such a tragical and unparalleled a manner as they did, this was their own doing, their own seeking. They themselves did give fire first unto the temple, and afterwards, by their desperate stubbornness, provoked the Roman soldiers to accomplish the combustion so contrary unto Titus's will and command, that nothing besides necessity would have excused them: but thus they and their forefathers provoked God himself to punish and plague them so often as they were plagued; he being always of his own nature and goodness more compassionate towards them, than any father can be towards his son, than any mother towards the fruits of her womb.

To conclude this point; the blood of these few 373
Galilæans which Pilate mingled with the blood of their sacrifices, and that disaster which befell those eighteen by the fall of the tower in Siloe, being compared with the national disaster of Jerusalem and Galilee, bear but the same proportion which the cloud that Elias's servant saw arising out of the sea like a man's hand did unto that great inundation which immediately followed upon it.

Now as none but a prophet could have prognosticated such abundance of moisture from so little an appearance, so none but the Prince of prophets could have discovered that unparalleled destruction of Galilee, Judea, and the Jewish nation, from such petty and private disasters as these two mentioned in my text, forty years before their accomplishment.

374 *The Moral Part of this Treatise.*

THE most useful considerations which these words discussed, compared with the former chapter, afford us, are for the general two.

First, They teach us to beware of rash judgment, or censuring others as extraordinary sinners, or more grievous sinners than ourselves, though God's visible judgments upon them (which are always most just) be extraordinary.

Secondly, They instruct us to lay God's extraordinary judgments upon others, or other unusual signs of the times, unto our own hearts. For these are the usual means whereby the Spirit of God doth work sinners to true repentance. Wherein true repentance (which is the duty whereunto our Saviour by these signs exhorts the people) doth consist, is the subject of other meditations consonant to these present.

To the first point, "that rash judgment, or unadvised censuring of others, is a foul fault even in best men,' all men, good and bad, do agree. But not to censure, or esteem of others on whom God hath shewed notorious judgments, as more notorious sinners than those which escape his judgments, this may seem for divers reasons questionable. First, as all sober-minded men agree, it cannot stand with the goodness of God to plague or punish any but for some sin or other. And if thus to deal with men be a branch of his goodness, it must be a branch of his justice to recompense extraordinary and grievous sinners with extraordinary and grievous punishments. What fault is it then to judge of the cause by the effect? why may we not censure them for notorious sinners, or more grievous sinners than ourselves, whom the righteous Lord hath remarkably

judged or grievously punished? If to reward every man according to all his ways be the irresistible rule of eternal and unchangeable justice, what reason have we to deny all those to be most grievous sinners which He, that cannot err in judgment, hath punished most severely?

Every part of these queries would sway much with any reasonable Christian, if there were no punishment reserved by God's eternal justice for the life to come. All of them would be unanswerable, if the truth of that maxim or general rule, *God rewards every man according to all his ways or works,* did determine or expire with our last mortal breaths. But seeing we all expect, or at least profess our expectation, that Jesus Christ shall come to judge, as well all those which are dead, as those which he shall find alive at his second coming, we cannot, by rule of faith or reason, expect that every man should be rewarded according to all his ways, before that last and final judgment. We may not presume that any man, the least sinner that dies in his sins, should be punished according to all his deserts before that last and general assize. After that day, or after the eternal and most righteous Judge hath given final sentence, we may safely say and pronounce, that this man hath been a more grievous sinner 375
than that, than we ourselves were, because we see him more grievously punished, or sentenced to a more grievous punishment than we or others are; but before this day it is not Christian-like, it is not safe, to say or think that this man is a more grievous sinner than we ourselves are, or that this man deserves to be more grievously plagued than we ourselves, or others whom we think well of, so long as either they or we have one hour's space left for repentance. To judge of the measure of any man's sins by the manner of his

punishments here on earth, or to determine of his future estate by his present death or disaster, is to usurp or trench upon Christ Jesus's royal prerogative, which to prejudice by word or sentence interlocutory, which to preoccupate by any peremptory or censorious thought, is more than a *præmunire*, a branch of high treason or rebellion against him.

Besides this exception, which clearly infringes the former allegations for judging of the cause by the effect, or measuring men's sins by the manner of their visible punishments, many positive reasons there be, which might persuade us that our most good and gracious God, without impeachment unto his unchangeable mercy and justice, may, and often doth in this life, shew extraordinary mercy to extraordinary sinners, and recompense ordinary sinners, men not so sinful as the best of us account ourselves to be, with extraordinary punishments in this life.

Both parts of this allegation may be proved by instance and by rule, by examples of scripture and by reasons grounded on scripture.

First, Because such as have been extraordinary sinners have obtained extraordinary mercy. There was not an honest matron or unmarried woman in the land of Judæa or Galilee but would have taken it for a defamation to have been compared to Mary Magdalen; she was a notorious sinner in that notorious sin of wantonness and uncleanness, and yet obtained greater mercy than any woman of her time, besides the blessed Virgin Mary, for she was endowed with an extraordinary measure of that excellent gift of love and charity: our Saviour gives her this testimony, that *she loved much;* and the reason why she loved much, was, because many sins, and those of the worst kind of sins, were forgiven her. Here was mercy two

ways extraordinary; first, in that she had many such sins forgiven her; secondly, in that she loved much: for this extraordinary measure of love, through the same goodness of God by which it was given her, was to have an extraordinary reward. Again, what disciple or apostle of our Saviour was there which might not have upbraided Peter with extraordinary ingratitude (which is the height of sin) for denying his Lord and Master three several times expressly, and in a manner judicially? and yet for all this, God's mercy and gracious favour towards him was extraordinary, even in respect of other disciples and apostles, *the disciple whom Jesus loved* only excepted. Paul for a long time was a blasphemer of the evangelical truth, a more furious persecutor of such as followed the ways of life, than the prince of his tribe, king Saul, had been of righteous David. And yet this man, from a notorious sinner, from a persecuting Saul, was changed into a zealous Paul, became a valiant champion for the faith, more zealous in maintaining it than he had been furious in persecuting such as professed it; and this sudden and extraordinary change was wrought by the extraordinary mercy of God.

But do not these and the like instances or examples 376
of God's extraordinary mercy, favour, and bounty, towards extraordinary and notorious sinners, no way prejudice or impeach the unchangeable mercy of God, or his impartial dealing with men? No; for the extraordinary mercy which he shewed did not extend to them only, but to all extraordinary sinners in the like kind unto the world's end. His extraordinary mercy and favour unto Mary Magdalen was a pledge of his mercy and favour to all like sinners of her sex, so they would by true repentance accept and embrace his mercy and favour manifested unto her. If any which

hear or read of his mercy exhibited to her do finally perish, their perdition is from themselves; if any truly repent, their salvation and repentance (by which they become immediately capable of salvation) is from the Lord. God's extraordinary mercy unto Peter, who had in a manner made shipwreck of his faith, was as *secunda tabula post naufragium*, as a plank or mast cast out after shipwreck, not only for his succour, but for the succour of all the Jewish nation which had denied the Lord that bought them. As many of this nation as after Peter's conversion were converted and saved, their conversion and salvation was merely from the Lord; as many of them as perished, did therefore perish, because they did not repent as Peter did; and they did therefore not repent, because they did not lay God's mercies towards him, and to their countrymen converted by him, to their hearts. That extraordinary mercy again which God exhibited unto Paul yields the assurance of faith, a sure anchor of hope, to all persecutors of the church, whether heathens, Turks, or infidels, that there is *plenteous redemption* with God in Christ, mercy plenteous to work repentance in them, and (by repentance) complete redemption of body and soul: as many of Turks or other infidels as do not repent, and by their not repentance perish, their perdition or not repentance is from themselves. Not the salvation only, but the repentance of such as do repent, is merely from God; and this God our Lord, who is rich in mercy towards all, did work repentance in Mary Magdalen, in St. Peter and St. Paul, by means and motives extraordinary, that all such sinners as they were might believe and know, that no sinners are excluded from possibility of repentance in this life, but that the mercy which he shewed to them by means extraordinary is daily exhibited by means ordinary,

that is, by the administration of the word and sacraments, unto all that do not wilfully exclude themselves.

The second point proposed was, that God doth award extraordinary visible punishments unto ordinary sinners, without impeachment to his unchangeable justice, or to that engraffed notion which all Christians have of his unpartial dealing with the sons of men.

It was an extraordinary visitation wherewith he visited the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh and their territories, 1 Sam. vi. 19; for *he smote of the people fifty thousand threescore and ten men, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord.* It was likewise an extraordinary punishment upon Uzzah, who being but a Levite, did touch the ark of the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 6: for he was smitten with sudden death; from which kind of punishment all of us do pray, or ought to pray, that the Lord would deliver us.

But may we therefore conclude that these men of Beth-shemesh were sinners above all the men of Judah, or that Uzzah was a more grievous sinner than any Levite of his age, on whom the Lord did not shew 377
like punishments? God forbid; yea our Saviour, who is both our Lord and God, hath in my text forbidden us to pass the like censure either upon them or upon any in after-ages on whom the like judgments have been visibly executed. That the men of Beth-shemesh did grievously sin in looking into the ark of God, no Christian can, no Jew doth deny; but that they were more grievous sinners in this than a great part of men (Christians by profession) are in this our age, none but an hypocrite will affirm. Leaving their persons to be judged by God, this their particular sin is more than doubled by all such as having neither lawful calling nor abilities to discern sacred mysteries,

will take upon them, not only to look into the ark of God, but to determine of his covenant of life and death, that is, of election and reprobation, the very grammatical notion of which terms they understand not.

As for the sin of Uzzah, it was for nature and quality the very same as if a parish clerk in our days should intrude himself into a deacon's office, as if a deacon should usurp the function of a presbyter, or a presbyter the office of a bishop. Now the delinquents in both these kinds are at this day more than ten to one in comparison of the men of Beth-shemesh to all the men of Judah, or in comparison of Uzzah to all the Levites of his time, which were not guilty of like sins in particular.

The judgments which God did shew upon the men of Beth-shemesh, and upon Uzzah, though extraordinary, were yet judgments tempered with mercy: for God in thus punishing them did forewarn all posterity not to trespass in the like kind as they did, lest a more grievous punishment either in this life or in the life to come do befall them; for as our apostle, 1 Cor. x. 6, in the like case saith, *all these were our examples.*

But many in this last age, and more than in any age since our Saviour died, and in this kingdom than in any one kingdom under heaven, have palpably transgressed after the manner of Uzzah and the men of Beth-shemesh.

May we hence therefore conclude that these men are more grievous sinners than any others of this age or nation which have not transgressed in particular after these men's example? No; the Lord hath forbidden us to pass this censure or judgment upon them: such as are most free from these presumptuous sins must ever remember that they have often grievously

transgressed the law of God in some one kind or other. All of us must lay that saying of our Saviour to heart; *Unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish.*

But though this place prohibits rash censure and judgment upon particular sinners, may not we which are God's ambassadors pronounce the like universal sentence which our Saviour here doth against all the inhabitants of Galilee and Jerusalem, with the same limitation against this or any other Christian nation, *Except ye repent, ye shall all perish*, after the same disastrous manner that the Jewish nation did? I tell you, Nay; this is beyond our commission, beyond our instructions, whom God hath appointed for his ambassadors. Our Saviour himself hath put in a caveat against all such presumptuous conjectures or pretended divinations. The calamities and distresses of Galilee and Jerusalem, of the whole Jewish nation, were so general and so tragical, as no nation since the beginning of the world had suffered the like, no other shall suffer the like unto the world's end: but then 378
all nations, *unless they repent, shall perish* after a more fearful and visibly disastrous manner than Galilee and Jerusalem did. But may we not in the mean time say, that these Galilæans, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, in whom this prophecy in my text was literally fulfilled, were sinners above all other nations or generations in the world, because they suffered such things as no other nation or generation had either suffered or shall suffer unto the world's end? I tell you, Nay.

But this present generation of the Jews did put our Saviour, the Son of God, the God of their forefathers, to an ignominious death: and this was the most grievous sin, *quoad speciem*, for its specifical quality, that could be committed; a sin that could not be com-

mitted again, for he was to die but once, *death hath no more dominion over him.* But though the Son of God could die but once, yet many this day living may be as guilty of his death as Judas or Pilate, as the most malicious amongst the chief priests, the Scribes, and Pharisees were. Or admit that those Jews were more deeply guilty of our Saviour's blood than any generation since; yet he that would hence infer his death to have been the chief or only cause of all the calamities which befell that present generation of the Jews wherein he died, should only prove himself to be more skilful in laying the charge, than in making the just exoneration, he should shew himself to be but half an accountant: but of this elsewhere.

But in what sense soever the putting of our Saviour to death was the cause of Jerusalem's destruction, yet this particular sin, in putting our Saviour to death, was not the sin or any part of the sins of which they are forewarned by our Saviour to repent; for this sin was not as yet committed, nor so much as thought upon by those *Galilæans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, or by those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell.* And no question but these men did perish for such sins as the nation was for the most part guilty of, and were forewarned of by exemplary punishments inflicted upon these Galilæans.

The persecution of our Saviour was but a symptom of those other sins, of whose deadly issue, without repentance, they were forewarned by these and the like signs of the time. The reason why they hated the Light of the world, after he had done so much good unto them, was, because their deeds were evil, John iii. 19: *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* What then

were those capital sins whereof they were warned in particular? Such, in the first place, was their present rebellious disposition, for which sin in particular these Galilæans did thus perish. But was this all? No; it is one thing to be rebellious, another to be unrelentingly rebellious: this unrelentance presupposeth some other fouler sin than rebellion. As what? Hypocrisy specially; and when our Saviour upbraids them with this title of hypocrisy, as when he saith, Luke xii. 56, Matt. xvi. 3, *Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the time?* his speech implies, that their hypocrisy was the chief cause why they did not discern the signs of the time; why they were so unrelentingly rebellious against God and man, that they would take no warning either from the Son of God or by the calamities of their brethren.

Now if any amongst us be as great hypocrites as 379
they were, they be as grievous sinners, as guilty of Christ's bloody death, and liable to as grievous punishments, either in this life or in the life to come, as they were.

A pharisaical hypocrite none can be, unless his soul be so wedded to some branches, as he conceives them, of holy doctrine, or zeal to God's word, that he would rather suffer his soul and body to be dissolved than be divorced from his opinions, that will not be ready, as opportunity serves, to persecute all such, even unto death, as will not comply with him, or maintain his faction. And this kind of hypocrisy always presupposeth some other sins which breed it, always includes some other sins or errors which feed and strengthen it. That error which breeds hypocrisy is a zealous desire to be extremely contrary in all or most points

unto them whom they undoubtedly know to contradict the truth as well in some opinions as practices.

Satan may instil other erroneous opinions into his scholars, and yet must be enforced to play the sophister before he can draw them to admit of his intended conclusions, that is, lewd or wicked practices; but if he can once insinuate immature persuasions, or strong presumptions of their irreversible estate in God's favour, he needs no help of sophistry to infer his intended conclusions. This antecedent being swallowed, he can enforce the conclusion by good logic, by rules of reason more clear than any syllogism can make it, than any philosophical or mathematical demonstration: for it is an unquestionable rule of reason, presupposed to all rules of syllogisms or argumentations, that an universal negative may be simply converted; as, 'If no man can be a stone, then no stone can be a man:' the rule is as firm in divinity, 'That if no hypocrite, no envious or uncharitable man, can enter into the kingdom of heaven, then no man that must enter into the kingdom of heaven, that is irreversibly ordained to eternal life, can be a hypocrite, can be an envious or uncharitable man.' Whence again it will clearly follow, that if the former opinions concerning men's personal or national irreversible estate in God's favour have possessed men's souls and brains before its due time, albeit they do the selfsame things that rebels do, that hypocrites, that envious or uncharitable men do, yet, so long as this opinion stands unshaken, they can never suspect themselves to be rebellious, to be hypocrites or uncharitable: that which indeed, and in the language of the Holy Ghost, is rebellion, will be favourably interpreted to be the liberty of conscience in defence of God's laws; envy, hatred, and uncharitableness

towards men, will go current for zeal towards God and true religion.

To illustrate or confirm these observations touching the original and symptoms of pharisaical hypocrisy, by the example and practice of these Jews, according to the order in which they have been now proposed. The first original was in the overprizing of the rigid reformation of their forefathers' profaneness.

Their fathers worshipped stocks and stones, the images or statues of heathen gods; these latter sought to be so extremely contrary to the heathen, or to the practices of their forefathers in this particular, that they would not endure any civil use of pictures; and their unrelenting zeal to maintain this rigid reformation was the original of that rebellion wherein they perished, after they had continued it seventy years more or less. For Herod the Great having erected a golden eagle upon the walls of the temple, not with 380 purpose to have it adored, but in testimony of his gratitude and allegiance to the Roman emperor, some of their rabbins, or great masters, did teach their scholars to deface it, though they died for it; and death in this holy quarrel was accounted martyrdom. Afterwards, they were pressed to admit a statue of the Roman emperor in their temple, but not urged, as I take it, to adore it; and this did blow the coals of former dissension, and was the original of that final rebellion under Nero. Now if they had not apprehended this rebellion as an holy war, or had not affected to become martyrs in defence of true religion, they might easily have deprecated this eyesore or grievance at the Roman deputy's hands, as the wiser sort of them sometimes had done.

But however these latter Jews, almost from the time of their return from Babylon, did increase the measure

of their forefathers' grosser sins by too nice and rigid reformation of them, and added pharisaical hypocrisy unto them as a new disease of the soul scarce heard of before, yet this hypocrisy, though epidemical to this nation, had not the strength to bring forth that monster of uncharitableness which did portend the ruin of this mighty people, until they were invaded by the Romans. For, from the time that this nation was brought into subjection by Pompey the Great, their church governors did allow and appoint daily sacrifices to be offered for the peace and tranquillity of the Roman empire, and security of the emperors. But a little before the fulfilling of this prophecy in my text, there arose a sect which did condemn this custom, after a hundred years' continuance, as unlawful, as contrary to the law of God, as a pollution of the temple. And it is a point observable by such as read the history of Josephus, that of all the irregularities or prodigious villanies committed in the temple during the time of the siege—as the tumultuous deposition of their high priests, and murder of them and others of better place—the faction surnamed (by themselves) *the zealous* were the chief authors and abettors. The fruit of this their blind and misguided zeal was to misinterpret the murder of their brethren, which would not comply with them in their furious projects, to be the best service, the only sacrifice then left to offer unto God; for the daily sacrifice of beasts did cease for want of provision, they having plenty or sufficiency of nothing but of famine.

Now to parallel the sins of our nation, of this present generation specially, with the sins of the latter Jews. As for sins against the second table, no man of unpartial understanding or experience can deny that we far exceed them, unless it be for murder only;

disobedience to parents, to magistrates; adultery, fornication, theft, false-witness-bearing; and coveting their neighbours' goods, are far more rife amongst us than they were or could be amongst them, at least in the practice. The keen edge of some few give us occasion to conjecture what the bloody issue of misguided zeal would be, could it once get as strong a back as it had in these Jews, when there was no king in Israel, or in that anarchy wherein every one did that which was pleasing in his own eyes. Again; no man not surprised with a Jewish slumber but may clearly see how many amongst us place a great part of religion in being as extremely contrary to the Romish church, as these latter Jews were to the idolatry or superstition of the heathen or of their forefathers. Now if this zeal of contrariety to Romish superstition be but equal to the like zeal in the Jews, the hypocrisy which is the 381
resultance of such misguided zeal must needs be more malignant; and easy it were, if place and time did permit, to demonstrate how these men condemn themselves by judging the Romish doctrine and discipline in her grossest errors and practices: antarctics they are, and think they can never be far enough from the north pole, until they run from it unto the south pole, and pitch their habitation *in terra incognita,* in a world and church unknown to the ancients, and I fear unto themselves.

But to let this error pass. If it were a grievous sin in this last generation of the Jews to prohibit the offering of legal sacrifices for the peace and security, for the weal and prosperity of the Roman emperors, whilst the partition wall betwixt the Jew and the Gentile was yet for the most part standing, it cannot be a less sin in such Christians as forbid us to offer up the calves or fruits of our lips, to wit, the sacrifice of

prayer, for all men, for all people in the world, since this partition wall was taken away. If thus to pray for all men were indeed an error, yet it were, alas! but *error amoris*, "a charitable error;" an error which deserved pity, rather than contempt and hatred of those who think themselves wiser in God's ways than their fathers in Christ; yet pity it they do not, but rather scorn and contemn it, or persecute such as practise it so far as they are able, that is, with bitter and slanderous words. And why do they so? Not out of hatred unto men's persons, if we may believe them, but out of zeal unto God's word, which forbids the practice of it, and must be obeyed before any injunctions of the church, which in their construction are but laws of men. But where doth God's word so expressly forbid it? Our Saviour's practice, as they allege, which ought to be to us a rule more sovereign than any rubrics in our church book, doth in their opinion by consequence condemn it, as John xvii. 9: *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.* This, for aught I know, is the only place that can be pretended against the practice of our church. But the question is not, whether our Saviour in this place, or at this time, did pray for his apostles alone, or for such as should believe through their report, but what it was which he prayed for them only? If our Saviour in this very place did pray his Father, not only to bestow some extraordinary gifts[k] upon his apostles, and such as they taught *viva voce*, but withal for some visible manifestation of these extra-

[k] The extraordinary blessings which our Saviour prayed for, were the visible endowments of the Holy Ghost, and that admirable union of soul and mind, and community of goods and possessions, &c. mentioned Acts ii. 3, 4, &c.; all which gifts were peculiar to these primitive times.

ordinary gifts bestowed upon them, this will no way exclude the world as it then stood, in opposition to true believers, *in sensu diviso*, from being partaker of his prayers for gifts ordinary. Now that our Saviour did thus pray for his apostles and the first converts to this end and purpose, that these extraordinary gifts bestowed on them alone might be an inducement to bring the world and all future generations to be partakers of ordinary gifts, is evident from vv. 20, 21: *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Our Saviour, in this prayer for the world, prays not only that it might be partaker of the outward means, but of the internal means of salvation, yea of salvation itself, for so he had premised, ver. 3: *This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.*

So far then is our church, or the ancient church 382
whom she follows, from contradicting our Saviour's meaning in this place, that they took his prayer and practice for their pattern. For as we are taught in our liturgy to pray for all men without exception, we are taught withal not to pray for all things for all men promiscuously, but respectively, for such things for every man as his estate and condition is immediately capable of. All men, of what nation or condition soever, as well *singula generum*, as *genera singulorum*, are either in the way of truth or out of it: this division admits no medium or third member. Now we are taught to pray for all men, for every man that is comprehended in this division, but not to pray for the same blessings for all. In the first place, we are

taught to pray, "That God would bring all those into the ways of truth as have erred and are deceived;" we do not pray to God to confirm them in the way of truth, until they be in it. Of such as are in the way of truth, (which is the second member of the universal division,) some do stand, that is, walk in it without stumbling; others fall; others walk in it, yet but weakly and droopingly: and, according to their several estates and conditions, we pray, first, "That God would strengthen such as do stand;" secondly, "That he would raise up such as do fall;" thirdly, "That he would help and comfort the weak-hearted, or fainting travellers, in the ways of truth; and finally, (not at our first conversion,) to tread down Satan under our feet;" for we must resist, we must encounter him before he will fly from us[1], and after his flight we must pursue the victory, or advantage gotten, before we can hope to trample upon him. But what success hath our church found by continuing this form of prayer more than other churches which contemn or deride it? The success we leave to God: yet this comfort we have; that albeit many or most of them for whom we thus daily pray may die in their sins, their blood shall not be required at our hands. As for such as malign or mock us for thus praying, let us continue our prayers for them also: "Father, forgive us, and forgive them, all our sins, negligences, and ignorances, and endue us with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, to amend our lives according to thy holy word."

[1] James iv. 7.

A SERMON

OR

POSTIL,

PREACHED IN NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1630.

LUKE XXI. 25.

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring.

THIS day, being the second Sunday in Advent, draws me, as you see, unto a new text, being part of the gospel for this solemnity; but my text doth not draw me to a new argument: my former argument, as ye may remember, was concerning the signs of the time; and here ye may behold signs of the time in the frontispiece of my text; *There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon,* &c. *upon the earth, and in the waters;* that is, in every part of this great and visible book of the creature. But of what, or of what times were these signs here foretold? To the former part of this question our evangelist hath made a full answer, ver. 27; these were signs of the Son of man's coming to judgment *with power and great glory.* By *the Son of Man,* ye know, is meant our Lord and Saviour Christ; and his coming was expected by this people,

one and other. John Baptist knew this to be the title of the Messias; and out of this notion or description of his person and office, he being in prison, sent two of his disciples unto him with this embassage, Luke vii. 19: *Art thou he that should come? or are we to look for another?* and from this embassage of John, the next Dominical or Lord's day takes its denomination, or right to be enrolled amongst the Dominicals consecrated to the memory of his coming. The Pharisees likewise knew this title of *him that was to come* to belong unto Christ, or *unto the great prophet, which God had promised to raise up unto them like to Moses.* And out of this notion they propound this interrogatory unto John, John i. 21, *Art thou Elias? Art thou that prophet?* and again, ver. 25, *Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?* And from John's answer to these inter-
386 rogatories, verr. 26, 27—*I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me*—the fourth and last Dominical takes its denomination, or right to be enrolled amongst the days consecrated to the memory of his coming. The Dominical or Lord's day last past takes its denomination from the gospel appointed for that day; *Behold, O Sion, thy King cometh,* &c.: so doth this present day, or second Sunday in Advent, take this title from that clause of the gospel, ver. 27, *And then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud.*

Now the coming of Christ, the Son of man and the Son of God, admits in the general two degrees: the first, his coming in humility to visit and redeem the world; the second, his coming in power and glory to judge the world. The gospels appointed by the church for the three other Dominicals or Lord's days in

Advent refer to the first manner of his coming, to wit, in humility to visit and redeem his people. The gospel appointed for this present day points at his coming in power and glory to judge the world. The question then is, whether this prophecy hath been in any sort already fulfilled, or in what sort it shall be hereafter fulfilled or accomplished? or, if this prophecy were twice to be fulfilled, the question is, whether these signs here mentioned in my text do concern as well the last fulfilling of it as the first? That this prophecy hath been already literally fulfilled is clear from verses 21 and 32 of this chapter; *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled.* All what? All that he had said concerning the signs of the time: so St. Matthew expresseth our Saviour's meaning more fully than St. Luke doth, Matt. xxiv. 34, *Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled;* that is, till the terrors of those times whereof he speaks, until the signs of these times *in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars,* should be exhibited. For by *this generation* he comprehends that present age, or compass of a hundred years, taking their beginning either from the time wherein he uttered this prophecy, or from the birth of these his auditors, the greater part whereof were betwixt twenty and fifty years, and but a few of them to live above fifty years after this forewarning; so that this age or generation whereof he speaks was to determine with the lives of these auditors: though many of them did not, yet some of them did, and more might have outlived these signs here foretold. For these signs were to be exhibited unto the nations not long after the desolation of Jerusalem, as St. Mark tells us, chap. xiii. 24: *But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon*

shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. Or lest any man should except that the sun might be darkened after the days of Jerusalem's tribulation and sorrow, and yet not be so darkened till the last day, St. Matthew hath put in a caveat against this exception, chap. xxiv. 29: *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.* So that if we can point out the time wherein all that our Saviour said concerning the tribulation of Jerusalem and Jewry were fulfilled, we may easily find out the appointed time wherein the signs in my text were to be exhibited.

That which must direct us in the right search of the tribulations precedent to his coming here literally
387 meant, is our Saviour's censure upon his disciples' admiration at the goodly buildings of the temple: *As he went out,* saith St. Matthew, xxiv. 1, *and departed from the temple, his disciples came to him to shew him the buildings of the temple.* St. Mark tells us, chap. xiii. 1, that *one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!* And because this one disciple is not named, St. Matthew indefinitely saith, *his disciples came unto him;* a strange humour in them, (were they one or more,) for how could they imagine that he had not observed the goodliness of these buildings before? but upon what occasion soever they or he (one or more of them) did move him to view the buildings, his reply unto this motion was unexpected: for *he saith unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,* Matt. xxiv. 2; Mark xiii. 2; Luke xxi. 6. And thus much

he had told them with weeping eyes before, Luke xix. 44; but it seems they were at better leisure to hearken unto this second prediction of the temple's destruction than they were before, when their ears were filled with the joyful shouts of *Hosanna, blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord!* And hence, *as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the signs when these things shall be fulfilled?* Mark xiii. 3, 4. All of his disciples—at least all of them which moved this question—did agree in this prenotion, that all these things should be fulfilled at his coming, and that at his coming to judgment the world should have an end. Hence St. Matthew, xxiv. 3, relates the question thus: *Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* But this question, though not so intended by them, was *fallacia ad plures interrogationes*, a question consisting of two parts, one so different from the other, that one and the same answer could not befit both; and therefore he makes answer *distinguendo*, or respectively to both parts. Concerning the signs of his first coming to declare himself to be the judge of the world, or the signs precedent to the destruction of the temple, he gives them a plain peremptory answer, Matt. xxiv. 4—36; and so again, Mark xiii. 5—32; and in this chapter, vv. 10—32. But concerning the other part of the question, when the world should end, or the signs that should precede, that he conceals, or rather exhorts them not to inquire after it: *But of that day and hour*, that is, the day of final judgment, or the end of the world, *knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only*, Matt. xxiv. 36: and

Mark xiii. 32; *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

That this answer concerns only the second part of the former question, to wit, the time wherein the world shall end, is hence evident, for that the angels, yea and such as understood the prophets, at least our Saviour Christ, as man, did know the time appointed for the destruction of the temple and the desolation of the holy city and land; for thus much was punctually and literally foretold by Daniel, chap. ix. 24: *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness,* &c. No
388 question but Daniel himself, and the angel which instructed him, did know the precise point of time when these *seventy weeks* did commence, although chronologers at this day vary a little upon this point; and he that knew the time when they begun, might easily collect at what time they were to end; for these *seventy weeks*, or seventy sevens of years, make up the just sum of four hundred and ninety years; and so long did Jerusalem continue after it was restored again by Cyrus and his successors in the Persian empire: and albeit our Saviour's disciples did not at that time perhaps clearly understand the prophecy of Daniel, yet they might clearly foresee the time of Jerusalem's destruction, by the signs which our Saviour gives them in this chapter and in the twenty-fourth of St. Matthew. The signs were specially three: First, earthquakes and strange commotions of wars in several nations, as specially between the Jews and other nations subject to the Roman empire. Secondly, the general hatred wherewith all nations did persecute

Christ's disciples, which were then no nation, but the fewest of any sect or profession; for unto the time between our Saviour's death and the death of the emperor Nero, that saying of our Saviour, *Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake*, hath special reference. And it was most remarkably fulfilled whilst the Jewish nation did flourish, or was in strength; for that nation did bear more deadly hatred to such as professed themselves to be Christ's disciples, than they did unto the heathen: and the heathens again, specially the Romans, did hate and persecute the Christians, as the worst sort among the Jews, of whom they took Christ's little flock to be a stem or branch, because the governors of it, Christ's apostles, were Jews by progeny: so that the laws which were enacted in Rome against the Jews were most severely executed upon the Christians, besides many lawless and barbarous cruelties which were practised upon many of them in the time of Nero without any check or impeachment. This was a second sign precedent to the desolation of Jerusalem. The third was *the abomination of desolation* foretold by Daniel, and expounded by our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. 15: *For the overspreading of abominations*, saith Daniel, chap. ix. 27, *he shall make it desolate, even unto the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.* It is termed by our Saviour *the abomination of desolation*, because it was an abomination which did portend the utter desolation of the city and of the temple wherein this abomination was practised by the seditious, or that faction which was called *the zealous.* And this abomination became most remarkable from that time that the seditious begun first to depose the high priests, and afterwards to murder them in the temple: for then they turned the house of God, not into *a den of thieves,*

but into a den of murderers, even a slaughterhouse. The fulfilling of this part of our Saviour's prophecy you may read at your leisure in Josephus, in his sixth book of the Jewish War, chap. i. p. 905. D.: "O miserable city," saith he, "what didst thou suffer at the Romans' hands to be compared unto this, although they entered with fire to purge thee from thy iniquity! for now thou wast no longer the house of God, neither couldst thou endure, being made a sepulchre of thine inhabitants, and having by thy civil wars made the temple a grave of dead bodies!"

It was the abomination which this desperate and gracelessly Jewish people did commit in the holy place (that is, in the temple and in the courts of it) which
389 brought that miserable desolation upon the temple, upon the city, and nation; the Romans were but executioners of God's wrath and vengeance against them: and those interpreters of the gospel who by *the abomination of desolation* understand the Roman forces, though many they be, yet the more they be or shall be, the more they multiply a strange error or gross incogitancy. But after the practice of such abominations as Josephus relates in the holy place, the doom pronounced by our Saviour against the temple, against the city and nation, became so inevitable, and was to be executed with so much speed, as every one that in those times feared God might see the just occasion and necessity of our Saviour's admonition, Matt. xxiv. 16, &c.: *Then let them which are in Judæa flee unto the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to fetch his clothes*, &c. *Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.* The same admoni-

tions of our Saviour are related *totidem verbis,* Mark xiii. 14—20; and by St. Luke xxi. 21—26, with some additions: *Then let them which are in Judæa fly unto the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them which are in the country enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* After God's wrath had once seized upon them, the execution of it was so nimble and quick, that if it had continued but some few weeks or many days as it had begun, all Isaac's seed according to the flesh had utterly perished; *but for the elect's sake,* or such as God had chosen out of that nation to propagate the kingdom of his Son, these days of tribulation were shortened; and however the persecution of both Jews and Christians did not determine with the destruction of Jerusalem, yet the number of Christians did multiply faster than the seed of Abraham according to the flesh had done in Egypt. Now all these signs which our Saviour had given of Jerusalem's destruction were fulfilled within forty years after his resurrection and ascension; and the dissolution of the temple and of the city, which these signs or abominations did portend, was accomplished in the autumn following.

Now after the exhibition of these signs and the tribulation of those days the fearful signs here mentioned in my text were immediately to follow. But how immediately? without any delay or interposition of time, of days, of months, or years? This we may not say, this we cannot safely collect from our Saviour's words. These signs were to follow immediately, *non immedia-*

tione temporis, sed immediatione signorum; that is, they were to follow immediately, not with reference to the next times ensuing, but with reference to the next remarkable signs of the times, of which the world (as well the Christians then increased, as the relics of the Jewish nation, as the Gentiles, who were the greatest part of the world) after the destruction of Jerusalem were to take warning. In this sense we say that one king is another's immediate successor, if there be no king between them, albeit there be an *interregnum* either of weeks or months betwixt them. The vacancy of an episcopal see for one or two years or more doth not make the next succeeding bishop not to be the other's immediate successor, albeit there be an inter-
390 mediate time betwixt the one's death or removal and the other's election or consecration. Thus, albeit the signs in my text did immediately succeed the former signs of Jerusalem's destruction, yet the world, as well the Jews and Christians as the Romans, had a convenient time allotted to pause or meditate upon the strange desolation of Jerusalem and Judæa, before the second rank of signs here in my text were to be exhibited; for they were not exhibited until the second year of Titus's reign. For seeing the nations would take no notice of Christ's kingdom or of God's judgments by the prodigious destruction of Jerusalem, it was, shall I say, his will, yea an act of his mercy, to give them a second, a more solemn public warning of that great and terrible day, wherein that Jesus whom the Jews had crucified, whom the Romans had strangely slighted and grievously persecuted in his members, will come with glory and power to execute judgment upon all ungodly men, upon all unbelievers or rebels against his kingdom.

But before I come to shew you the particular manner

how this prophecy was fulfilled within that age current wherein it was uttered, it will be expedient to acquaint you with the strange manner how the Jews first, and the Romans after them, did misconstrue or pervert the signs of the time which God had given them for their good. The heathen writers themselves acknowledge there was a constant fame or received opinion throughout the East, that the land of Jewry in this age should bring forth one who was to be Lord and King over the whole world: this general fame and opinion took its original from the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning our Saviour's birth and resurrection; and unto these prophetical predictions all the signs of the time did fully accord: yet seeing our Saviour's *kingdom was not of this world*, though more universal; seeing the authority which he exercised was merely spiritual, not temporal; seeing he would not take upon him to imprison, to put to death, or to divide inheritances, or to manage wars against the enemies of this people, they slighted him then, as most part of the world have done his true ambassadors since; for who is there almost that fears the edge of the spiritual sword, unless it be backed with the temporal? But did the Jewish nation then take notice of the former constant fame throughout the East concerning the great Lord of lords which was then to arise out of Jewry? or had they no apprehension of the signs of the time which did confirm or seal the truth of the prophecies which occasioned this fame? Yes; the signs of those times did work very strange, though very bad effects, even in the very worst of this people; their hearts were so overgrown with pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, that the abundance of these and the like bad humours did turn good physic, even the food of life itself, into deadly poison.

For out of this undoubted prenotion that this was the very time wherein the Lord had promised to deliver this people from the hands of their enemies, they became so prone (as the event proves they were) to take arms and rebel against the Romans, partly about the time of our Saviour's birth, but especially after his resurrection, when his kingdom began to be propagated through the world. There was no man of greater might or potency amongst them which did not take upon him to promise this people's deliverance from the Roman yoke, with which the more they
391 struggled the sorer it crushed them; and the multitude were as prone to believe every one that would take upon him the name or title of a Saviour or Deliverer. The foresight of this proneness in great ones to promise salvation to this people, and the people's promptness to believe them, did occasion our Saviour to give these admonitions to his disciples, *Beware of false Christs*, Matt. xxiv. 4. Mark xiii. 6. Luke xxi. 8, which would arise in Jewry before the destruction of Jerusalem, with such fair enticing promises and pretences of deliverance, *that if it had been possible the very elect should have been deceived by them.* And no question but many of our Saviour's disciples had followed these false Christs, unless their Master the true Christ had expressly forewarned them to beware of them, or unless he had instructed them that the victory which God had promised to give his people at this time over their enemies was not to be purchased by strength of sword, but by patient possessing of their own souls in time of wars and persecutions: and of these times, wherein false prophets or false Christs did so prevail with this people, was that saying of our Saviour, John v. 43, remarkably fulfilled: *I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if an-*

other shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

The wisest amongst the Romans, and amongst the rest Tacitus, that great statesman or politician, observing the Jews to have failed so foully in their hopes of becoming lords over the nations by their expected King or Messias, turned greater fools than the Jews had been; for having acknowledged the truth of the former prophecy, which was so famous and so constantly received throughout the East, he would have it fulfilled in Vespasian, in that he was called out of Judæa unto the empire of Rome, that is (as they interpret it) to be lord of the whole world: and, which is most strange, Josephus himself, a Jew by birth and education, and therefore acquainted with the prophecies or prenotions concerning their Messias, was either the author of this foolish interpretation, or the first author now extant that did publish it. Tacitus adds some credit to Josephus's report of the constant fame throughout the East that Judæa should at that time bring forth the Lord of the whole world, but he makes no addition to Josephus's folly in misapplying that which the prophets had said, and the eastern nation had received concerning the King that was to arise out of Judæa unto Vespasian, making him and his sons, of true and lawful emperors, false Christs. Now to awake the Romans out of this proud fantastic dream, the true Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, and Judge of quick and dead, did exhibit these signs here mentioned in my text before the Romans had fully digested their triumphant feast and joy for the victory which they had gotten over the Jewish nation, Italy and Rome itself became the stage whereon these fearful spectacles were acted, and the whole Roman empire were more than spectators, if no actors, yet pa-

tients in this doleful tragedy. Besides the destruction of the old world by water, and of Sodom and other four cities by fire and brimstone, no history of the world doth mention any such strange calamities as issued from the burning of the mount Vesuvius in Campania, which first happened in the first or second year of Titus, although it hath oftentimes since procured great annoyance to neighbour provinces. But that it begun first to burn in the days of Titus is clear from the untimely death of Pliny the Elder, that great naturalist, who out of curiosity going to search the cause of it, was choked to death with the smoke.

392 I have often put you in mind heretofore, that many historians which either never read the sacred prophecies, or did not mind them when they wrote their histories, are usually the best interpreters as well of the prophecies in the Old as New Testament. Nor is the fulfilling of any prophecy in the Old Testament more literally or more punctually related, either in the Old or New Testament, than the fulfilling of this prophecy in my text is by Dio Cassius, a most judicious and ingenious heathen writer in the reign of Titus: "The sudden earthquakes were so grievous, that all that valley was sultring hot, and the tops of the mountains sunk down: under the ground were noises like thunder, answered with like bellowings above: the sea roared, and the heavens resounded like noise: huge and great crashings were heard, as if the mountains had fallen together: great stones leaped out of their places, as high as tops of hills, and after them issued abundance of fire and smoke, insomuch that it darkened the air, and obscured the sun, as if it had been eclipsed; so that night was turned into day, and day into night: many were persuaded that the giants had raised some civil broils amongst themselves, because they did see

their shapes in smoke, and heard a noise of trumpets; others thought the world should be resolved into old chaos, or consumed with fire: some ran out of their houses into the streets, others from the streets or highways into their houses; others from sea to land, some again from the land to the sea." *Dio Cassius in Historia Titi.*

Besides the large extent of this calamity through Egypt, Syria, and Greece, and great part of Africa, related by this author, and touched upon in the first book of Comments upon the Creed, p. 49, &c., the Latin reader may find many other circumstances in other good writers, as in Procopius, Zonaras, &c. faithfully collected by Maiolus, *Tractatu de Montibus*, pp. 520, 521.

Though Cedrenus were a Christian, yet I think when he wrote the History of Phocas he had as little mind or thought of the fulfilling of St. John's prophecy, Rev. viii. 8, &c. as Dio Cassius had of the accomplishment of our Saviour's prophecy in my text[a]: *And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.* Cedrenus, after a brief character of Phocas's ill favoured body and conditions, in which latter his consort did too well agree with him, tells us, "that in his time there was an inundation of all manner of mischiefs upon mankind, an infinite number of men and beasts died, and the earth denying her increase,

[a] Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ πάντα ἐπερίσσευσε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τὰ κακὰ θνῆσις ἀνθρώπων καὶ κτηνῶν πολλὴ καὶ ἀναρίθμητος ἀφορίαι τῆς γῆς, καὶ λιμοὶ, καὶ λοιμοὶ χαλεπώτατοι, καὶ χειμῶνες τηλικοῦτοι, ὡς παγῦναι τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ τεθνᾶναι τοὺς ἰχθύας. Lib. i. Comment. in Symbolum Apostolicum.

the famine and grievous pestilences arose, and the winters were so sharp and cruel, that the sea freezed, and the fishes in it perished." *Cedrenus in Compendio Historiæ*, p. 332. These were strange signs of the time, and did portend the greatest alteration that ever befell Christian churches by the erection of the two grand antichristian tyrannies, the one in the East, the other in the West.

All that I have for this present to add unto my former observations concerning the burning of Vesuvius is the admirable disposition of God's providence, in that he would not have the fulfilling of this prophecy in my text to be recorded by any evangelist or other sacred writers, but by this heathen historian: a bright ray or beam of Divine providence you may observe in so disposing the testimonies of these times,
393 as that the evangelist St. John, who usually relates our Saviour's speeches more distinctly and more at large than the other three evangelists, doth not so much as mention our Saviour's prophecies, either concerning the signs preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, or these signs in my text, which were signs of his coming to judge the nations. The reason, I take it, was, because St. John, of all the four evangelists, did outlive both sorts of the signs, for he was alive in the days of Trajan the emperor, betwixt whose reign and the reign of Titus, in whose days these signs in my text were exhibited, Domitian and Cocceius Nerva did successively reign over the Romans; and it may be St. John did purposely omit the relation of our Saviour's prophecies concerning these signs or prognostics, whether of Jerusalem's destruction or of Christ's coming to judge the nations, because he knew when he wrote his Gospel he was to outlive them, and for this reason his relation of them would have been more liable to suspi-

cion, or to the exceptions of the Jews or heathen, than the relations of St. Matthew, Mark, or Luke were, seeing they all died before the destruction of Jerusalem. But did St. John know, or what presumptions have we to think he did know, that he was to continue his pilgrimage here on earth until this prophecy of my text were fulfilled, that is, until Christ's coming to give all the nations of the world, as well as Jerusalem, a solemn warning of his power and purpose to judge the world? This, St. John might know, or this he could not but know, from our Saviour's speeches to him and St. Peter, related by him, John xxi. 18—23. Our Saviour had signified or intimated to St. Peter, *by what manner of death he should glorify God*, and bid him *follow him;* the meaning is, that he should be crucified, as our Saviour had been. But Peter, not content to know the manner of his own death, turned about, and seeing St. John, saith to Jesus, *Lord, what shall this man do?* and *Jesus said unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* The rest of the brethren, that is, of Christ's disciples, made a false descant upon this sure ground; for they hence collected that St. John should not die at all; but this misconstruction of our Saviour's words St. John himself, ver. 23. of that chapter, plainly refutes: *Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* Yet this his annotation or comment upon our Saviour's words did better refute errors past than prevent the errors or misconstructions of times ensuing; for surely they err which interpret our Saviour's words as a mere put-off to Peter's curious question, or as if they contained no such prediction or prophecy concerning John as the former did concerning Peter: and there is a medium between the construction which the disciples then

made of our Saviour's words, and that construction which others have made since. The disciples hence collected, that John should not die at all; others collect, that our Saviour's speech was merely hypothetical or conditional; yet being proposed by way of interrogation, it is equivalent to this assertory or affirmative: "It is my will that he should tarry till I come; do not thou grudge at this, but follow me." Now, as you have heard before, there is a twofold coming of Christ; the one, typical or representative, which is the coming here mentioned in my text, and meant by our Saviour in his answer to Peter, John xxi. 22; the other, real or consummative, to wit, his last coming to judgment. The disciples did err only in this, that they understood our Saviour's words unto St. Peter of his last coming to judgment: and if John had been to tarry on earth
394 till that time, the consequence had been true, he should not have died, but, as St. Paul speaks, he should have been *changed*. But our Saviour speaks of his coming here mentioned in my text, of which coming St. John and others then living were to be witnesses and spectators; and of this coming the destruction of Jerusalem was a sign by which his disciples then alive might prognosticate or expect it before they died. But of his last coming to judgment, at least of the time of the world's end, our Saviour in my text gave no sign, but rather inhibited his disciples to inquire after it, seeing it was then reserved to his Father only. And if any be disposed to seek after the signs of that day, these he must learn of St. John in his Revelation, who saw his first coming to judgment in such a sense and manner as he had seen the kingdom of heaven come with power and glory, at his transfiguration upon the mount.

But though the time of Christ's coming to judg-

ment be uncertain, though we may not expect that he should come unto us in such visible manner as he did to this generation, yet he daily comes to us in a more real manner, if we will prepare our hearts to entertain him: for so he comes to us in his word, and in the sacraments; and this his coming shall be unto judgment, unless we examine and judge ourselves. But if we will judge ourselves, we shall not be judged of the Lord; yea he comes unto us in mercy and loving-kindness. One way or other he comes to all: *Behold,* saith he, *I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me,* Revel. iii. 20. Yet he which thus knocketh that we may open hath commanded us to *knock that it may be opened to us.* And indeed the only way by which we can open the door to him is by continual knocking at the gate of mercy, that he would open that unto us, that he would come unto us by his grace, by the sweet influence of his own everlasting sacrifice. Lord, hear us when we call upon thee, and open unto us, and so come unto us, yea *so come quickly.*

A brief Appendix to the former Treatise of the Signs of the Time, or Divine Forewarnings.

Of ominous presagements, or abodings good or bad, whether given, taken, or affected; and of prodigies or portendments, which are for the most part public signs of the times wherein they are exhibited, I had in my younger and better days written a large treatise, which hitherto I have not had the opportunity or

leisure to publish, out of which I have borrowed two or three instances in the former treatise. But amongst all the forewarning signs given to this land, as so many summons to repentance, none which have been given within my memory did make so durable impression upon my heart and thoughts as that late mighty wind, which, having begun his terrible visitation from the utmost point of the south-west, did continue it in one night unto the north-east corner of this southern province. This was more than a sign of the time; *tempus ipsum admonebat*, the very time itself wherein it happened, being the vigils of that great anniversary,
395 November 5, was a sign, to my apprehension, most significant, and doth interpret the meaning of this terrible messenger's inarticulate voice much better than any linguist living this day, as well as the prophets (were any such now alive) could do. Both the messenger, and the time wherein he delivered his message, do teach us that truth which hath been often mentioned in these former meditations more punctually and more pithily than I could then, or can yet express it. Thus much of his meaning the serious reader may understand: that albeit we of this kingdom were in firm league with all nations of the earth with whom we have had any time commerce, although our greatest enemies should become our greatest friends, yet it is still in the Lord Almighty's power, and as we may fear in his purpose, to plague this kingdom more grievously by his own immediate hand, or by this invisible but most audible messenger, or by other like storms and tempests, than at any time he hath done by the famine, by the sword, or by the plague of pestilence; to bury more living souls, as well of superior as of inferior rank, in the ruins of their stately houses or meaner cottages, than the powderplotters did intend

to do, or the powderplot itself, had it taken effect, could have done.

God grant every member of this church and kingdom grace to look into his own heart and purposes; and to all in authority, whether superior or inferior, from the highest to the lowest, to look not only unto their own, but unto others' ways of whom they have the care or oversight, that these may run parallel with the ways of God: which if we shall continue to cross, or fall foul upon them, or his most sacred laws, it is not any parliamentary law, not any act of state, or decrees of courts of justice, that can break the stroke of his outstretched punishing arm and hand, or fend off his dreadful judgments threatened from falling more heavy upon us than at any time hitherto (his name be praised) they have done. Finally, although our public fasts, or solemn deprecations for averting his judgments from this land, have for the time being ceased by the same authority by which they were begun; yet no authority, no act of state, doth prohibit any private man to fast upon the days appointed by the church, whose canons enjoin, though not whole families, yet of every family some one or other, to resort unto the house of the Lord, to offer up prayers and supplications appointed by our church, upon two other special days in the week besides the Lord's day. Nor are any prohibited upon these days to offer up, besides their supplications for averting his judgment, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for our many deliverances past, unto Him to whom all praise, power, dominion, and thanksgiving are due.

NAZARETH AND BETHLEHEM,

OR

ISRAEL'S PORTION IN THE SON OF JESSE:

AND

MANKIND'S COMFORT

FROM THE

WEAKER SEX:

TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH, IN OXFORD.

Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.—1 Timothy iii. 16.

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD, AND MY VERY GOOD LORD,

JAMES,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE, LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER;

T. J. WISHETH ALL GRACE AND HAPPINESS.

RIGHT REVEREND AND HONOURABLE,

SINCE it hath pleased such as have hitherto been spectators, as well of my weakness, as of my industry in the ministry, to pardon the one for the other's sake; it is, and ever shall be, my care, to have your Lordship, (under whose patronage, as honourable successor to my worthy founder, I now enjoy the continuance of former opportunities,) no witness of my sloth or idleness. Yet these papers I produce not, either in testimony of my pains, which in so little a work cannot be great; or as a proof of my diligence in polishing what hereafter I mean to set forth. Rather out of indulgence to my bodily indisposition, and diligent forecast how long my journey is like to be, I have begun after such a manner, as, by God's assistance and your Lordship's wonted countenance, I may hope to continue. To leave some fuller explication than I have found of the admirable consonancy between ancient presignifications, whether prophetical, typical, or historical, and evangelical relations, concerning our Saviour's conception, his birth, his baptism, passion, re-

surrection, and ascension, (or other like parts of his humiliation and exaltation,) is the point whereto my studies have been consecrated, and my observations principally directed, since I undertook the ministry: and in this respect I may truly call my meditations in this kind the first-fruits of all my labours. Now of this crop, which, with reference to my poor harvest, is like to be very great, as much at least as all the rest, and as I trust most acceptable to my God, I have brought this little sheaf unto your Lordship, humbly desiring that you would vouchsafe to offer it up unto Him by whose only blessing all the rest must be sanc-
400 tified. Thus omitting longer preface, until I may fit it with a larger work, I humbly commend your Lordship to the gracious protection of our heavenly Father, and this slender pledge of my most entire observance to your benign acceptance.

Your Honour's in all duty and service

to be commanded,

THOMAS JACKSON.

From my study in Corpus Christi College, in Oxford,
September 6, 1617.

BOOK VII.

NAZARETH AND BETHLEHEM;

OR,

ISRAEL'S PORTION IN THE SON OF JESSE.

JEREMIAH XXXI. 21, 22.

Turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go astray, O thou rebellious daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man.

1. IT is the observation of a most ancient father[a], *Omnis prophetia priusquam impleatur ænigma est,* "Every prophecy before it be fulfilled is a riddle:" and amongst prophecies the latter part of this my text not the least enigmatical. For our better understanding the true meaning of these words in themselves, their coherence with the former, and my prophet's drift or scope in all, may it please you (men, fathers, and brethren) to consider the time was now come wherein the Lord had put *Judah also out of his sight, and cast off Jerusalem, the city which he had chosen.* Benjamin was become Ben-oni, a son of sorrow unto his mother: for *a voice was heard in Ramah, mourning, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted, because they were not*[b], in the

[a] Irenæus. [b] Jer. xxxi. 15.

land of her burial and their father's birth. But the Lord, always more tender and compassionate towards his children than a woman towards the children of her womb, yea, than tender Rahel herself towards her dearest son, whose birth had cost her her life, in the midst, yea even in the first beginning of these his judgments, remembers mercy. He now sends Judah into captivity after Israel, but as a second arrow to find out a former lost. And Benjamin must go, though as sore against his own will, into Chaldæa, as he had done sometimes against his father's into Egypt, yet in the Almighty's determination, as well now as then, to redeem his brother from that thraldom wherein he had been long detained. For the Lord had put up Ephraim's lamentation with Rahel's tears for Benjamin, desirous, as he himself in the verses following protests, to prepare one and the same medicine for both their maladies. *Refrain thy voice from weeping, Rahel, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the*
402 *land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own borders. I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus; Thou hast corrected me, and I was chastised*[c], &c.

2. But as Ephraim's intemperancy had been greater, more wilful, and of longer continuance than Judah's or Benjamin's had been, so his recovery was now more difficult, and put his heavenly Physician to a greater plunge than when it enforced him to cry out, *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee*[d]? He was become as a man whose nature is so far spent that no physic can be safely administered to him. Long calamity and distress brings ofttimes the souls of

[c] Jer. xxxi. 16—18. [d] Hosea vi. 4.

God's children so far out of taste with his sweetest mercies, that they loathe their very proffer no less than sick men do the sight of meat. *The Lord is with thee, thou valiant man*, saith the angel of the Lord to Gideon: but he replies, *Ah my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this come upon us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, and said, Did not the Lord bring us out of Egypt? but now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites*[c]. More wayward and diffident my prophet foresaw Ephraim or Israel for the most part would be. The best of them, albeit they mistrust not the truth of God's promises unto Abraham, yet doubt whether theirs and their fathers' sins have not forfeited their interest in them. If they acknowledge God's summons for Judah's return and theirs to be the same, yet with old Anchises in like case they find a difference in their estates,

> ——— Vos o quibus integer ævi
> Sanguis, ait, solidæque suo stant robore vires,
> Vos agitate fugam[f].

Such as had fresh and lively spirits to wield their strong and able limbs, seeing their arms could not defend their country from the violence of their enemies, might use the benefit of their legs to escape their burial in her ruins:

> Me si cælicolæ voluissent ducere vitam,
> Has mihi servassent sedes[g].

But sure, if the gods intended Anchises any longer lease of his life, they would allow houseroom to his aged bones in Troy. Thus why Judah and Benjamin should return unto their borders, distrustful Ephraim

[c] Judges vi. 12, 13. [f] Virg. Æneid. ii. 638. [g] Ibid.

could conceive these or like reasons: "The time of their captivity is not set so long but many which have seen Jerusalem in her glory may live to see the *city built up upon her own heap, and her palaces remaining after their wonted manner*[g]. *Their children shall be as aforetime, their noble ruler shall be of themselves, their governor shall proceed from among them*[h]. But as for Ephraim, our fathers said it in their haste and fury, and we their posterity must for ever be bound unto the bargain: *What portion have we in David? we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse*[i]. Many of his goodly stems, now planted by the palms of Babel, may take root again in their native soil, and be as a shelter to the tender grafts that must sprout out of the lower shrubs of Judah: but he that shall look upon the remediless spoil and waste, long since made throughout all the mountains of Samaria, will he not take up his parable and say, Ephraim is as a wood destroyed, wherein is never a sampler left? The youngest sprig
403 that was removed thence is now doted or withered with eld in a strange and wearyish soil. How many of our fathers, which had never seen the light in the land of their conception, being brought captives hither in the womb, have we seen (after their sight had failed them, for very age and long expectation of return) enclosed in the bowels of a foreign earth, yet now no more a stepmother to us their children that are left behind! A hundred years are past and gone since our fathers were rooted out of their native land, and seventy more are yet to come before our promised deliverance be accomplished. And what comfort can it be to any of Ephraim's race to return after so long time into the land of Israel, now as strange and un-

[g] Jer. xxx. 18. [h] Ver. 20. [i] 1 Kings xii. 16.

couth unto us as Media and Assyria were to our fathers!"

3. That Ephraim was thus affected, the issue did too well prove; for few, if any, of this tribe did return with the captivity of Zion; and such of them as afterwards returned did for the most part inhabit Galilee, or regions allotted to other tribes. This backwardness, whether general in Israel or more particular in Ephraim, was portended in the ominous character of this prophecy: wherein that God, which was a loving Father to all the sons of Abraham, appears more anxious and solicitous for Ephraim than for Judah and Benjamin, whose return from captivity was more speedy and entire. And my prophet, from foreknowledge of this distrustful temper in Ephraim, makes trial of so many courses to make him relish God's promises, which he condites of purpose for his palate in sweetest terms of dearest love; sometimes entreating him under the name of Ephraim, sometimes under the name of Israel, as if he would try whether the one were not more lucky than the other; sometimes wooing him with fairest promises of gracious favours to come: *I will build thee, and thou shalt be builded, O virgin Israel: thou shalt still be adorned with thy timbrels, and go forth in the dances of them that be joyful. Thou shalt yet plant vines upon the mountains of Samaria: and the planters that plant them shall make them common*[k]. Sometimes recounting his former kindness: *I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first-born*[l]: for when I shared Reuben's dignity amongst his brethren, did I not so esteem of Ephraim? Levi had his priesthood, and Judah his kingdom, but the double portion was reserved for Joseph: and the

Why Ephraim is called God's first-born.

[k] Jer. xxxi. 4, 5. [l] Ver. 9.

lot whose disposition belongs to me fell to Ephraim, though the younger brother, in the fairer and larger ground. Sometimes again, like a pensive father jealous of every occasion that might scare a fugitive, wild, untamed son from approaching his presence, he protests his sorrow for his severe chastisements past: *Is Ephraim my dear son? is he my pleasant child?* Should I tell him so, his bitter correction would not suffer him to believe it. *Yet since I spake unto him, I still remembered him: my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord*[m]. If the difficulty of the way deter thee, thou shalt not wander as thy fathers did in the wilderness, whiles the paths by which the spoilers led thee are fresh in memory: *set thee up waymarks, and make thee high heaps for thy direction, and set thine heart towards the pathway that thou hast walked*[n]: thy return shall be as quick and speedy as thy departure. Or if the mountains of Ephraim be polluted, Tabor and Hermon are not so; Zabulon and Nepthalim must yet see a wondrous light. Let Ephraim, if he loathe his own inheritance as unclean, take possession among his brethren; or in case he linger behind, as disdaining that Judah should be his leader, let not his bad example entice the other sons of Jacob to draw back, as it sometimes did them to revolt from David: *Turn again, O virgin Israel,* (for thou shalt no more be
404 upbraided with the adulteries of Samaria,) *turn again to these thy cities, my beloved daughter, my pleasant child, only refractory and rebellious in this, that thou wilt not hasten thy retire, whenas the Lord hath purposed to create a new thing in thy territory, there the woman shall encompass the man.* This is

[m] Jer. xxxi. 20. [n] Ver. 21.

the upshot of all my prophet's sweet and pathetical invitations of Israel to return from captivity. This new and strange event of a *woman encompassing a man* is as a peerless garland, proffered first to Ephraim as the head of his brethren, or, in the second place, unto such of the ten tribes as would be most forward to undertake the course. We must needs then, with venerable antiquity, and some most ancient[o] reformers of the religion which we profess, acknowledge some extraordinary matter to be here promised. Howsoever, sundry learned interpreters of latter times seem not to account it such, but, as if they had begun to slumber when they came to the words of my text, (disposed to take a nap with my prophet, or with him of whom he spake, ver. 26, *Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me,*) they pass over this mystery as in a dream.

4. For the right unfolding whereof, four words there be in the original of remarkable use; and we will dispense with ordinary translations for not fully expressing them, whenas many learned commentators, otherwise very skilful in the Hebrew, scarce deign to take notice of their true and proper grammatical value, much less of their prophetical references or importances. The first, בארץ, translated as you have heard, *in the earth,* which phrase in our English is usually as much as if he had said, *in orbe terrarum,* "in the world;" whereas by the circumstances of the place, and consonancy to the Hebrew dialect most frequent in prophetical writings, it must be restrained unto that part of the earth whereunto he solicits these Israelites' return: *I create a new thing in the land,* to wit, of Israel, or the kingdom of Ephraim, as it is opposed unto the two other tribes, as Pomeranus hath

[o] Pomeranus.

learnedly observed. The second original word is here rendered (as well as conveniently it could be in one word) by *woman;* yet is it not אשה, or בתולה, but נקבה; as if he had said, *The female shall compass the male;* though somewhat more be included in the word גבר than a male, or man.

5. The sacred mystery of this speech may best appear by comparing this new creation of the second Adam in the virgin's womb with the creation of the first woman in Adam; with reference whereunto this is called a new creation, wherein the order of the former is inverted. It is said, *In his image created he him, he created them male and female*[p]. The reason of which enigmatical speech (whence Plato, as I think, took his fable of Androgyni) is, because Moses there speaks of Adam's creation only, in whom notwithstanding Eve was in a sort created or enclosed as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh: he speaks of him in both numbers as of *unum actu* which was *potentia plura.* The like manner of speech he useth in the first verse, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth:* yet neither was then distinctly created, but the mass, whence both were afterwards distinguished as it were into male and female, that is, into such heavens as now are the agents, and such an earth as now is the mother whence all earthly creatures are produced. In this new creation the Lord encloseth not Zakar, Ish, or Adam, not Masculus only, but *Gever,* i. e. *vir fortis,* the valiant or strong man, the grand
405 heroic of the world, in the female or weaker vessel. *The female shall compass the male,* not after the usual manner of children's enclosure in the womb, but as Evah was enclosed in Adam, or as the shell encloseth the kernel, whose first root of existence is from within,

p Gen. i. 27.

not from without; whose enclosure every way is entire, never opened to receive what it encloseth, but only to have it taken forth. This, I take it, is the natural and true meaning of these words in this subject whereof we speak, considered with such references as have been specified.

6. Our small acquaintance, whether with the peculiar signs of these ancient times, or with many common prenotions, (concerning the manner of Messiah's birth or conception,) which either my prophet might presuppose as sufficiently known to them for whose good he wrote, or this prophecy occasion their successors to inquire after, against the time appointed, will not suffer us to apprehend either the appositeness or efficacy of these brief persuasions so fully as the observant Israelites before or about our Saviour's coming might easily have done; yet, if we may guess at the force of his argument by such references and circumstances as have left some print behind them in the revolutions of times, unfolding this prediction which he had wrapt up in enigmatical generalities, it is more fully thus:

"Dost thou therefore stand off, and disdain thy return to these thy cities, O thou virgin, but haughty and rebellious Israel, because the glory of Shiloh's birth shall be thy sister Judah's, and not thine? Doth it grieve thee that Beth-lehem-Ephratah, sometimes so little amongst the thousands of Judah, should now overtop the chief cities of Samaria? A prophet from the mouth of the Lord hath said it, and it must of necessity come to pass, *That out of Beth-lehem he shall come forth that shall bear rule in Israel; whose goings forth have been from the beginning, and from everlasting*[q]. Ephratah it was rightly called of old,

[q] Micah v. 2.

and it happily hight Beth-lehem since, ordained from eternity to bring forth the bread of life: but neither hath Israel borne Ephraim's name for nought; fruitfulness also is with thee; these thy cities, though little and barren in thy sight, are not forsaken of thy God: thou hast likewise a prophet's word for thy assurance, that albeit Judah must bring him forth, yet Israel shall be the land of his conception, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. Account it not blind chance, but thy good hap, that thy name is first mentioned in the re-establishing of my ancient grant: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land*[r]. Search the prophets at the time appointed, and it shall be shewed thee, that whilst one of them made this glorious promise in my name to Beth-lehem, another (no enemy to the house of Judah) did foretell thy fathers, that the root of Jesse should recover his sap, and give first beginning of life to *the Branch of righteousness* within thy borders[s]: though by birth he must be a Beth-lehemite, and of David's lineage, yet the name by which he must be best known shall be taken from one of thy cities, wherein, being first conceived, *he shall grow up as a branch out of a decayed trunk, or as a root of a dry ground*[t], not as a young plant from the live seed of a former tree. That this place of his conception is not so clearly named by Isaiah as the place of his birth by Micah, doth this
406 dismay thee? The greater secresy is a sign of a

[r] Jer. xxxiii. 14, 15. [s] Isaiah xi. 1. [t] Isaiah liii. 2.

greater mystery. I know thee of old; thou art coy, thou art strange, and must be wooed with rarities and new wonderments: and what wonder since the world began hath been heard of like to this *new thing*, which I create in these thy cities, that a woman (without the consort of man) should enclose him in her womb *whose outgoings have been from everlasting*. The creation of heaven and earth may in comparison of this new creation be held stale and trivial."

7. Of this enigma in my text, and that other forementioned, chap. xxxiii. we may say as Joseph did of Pharaoh's dreams, *Both are one*. So is that nursery of mysteries, Isaiah xi. 1, wherein the place of his conception and education is secretly named, and the like, Isaiah liii. of *a root growing up out of a dry ground*. This metaphor of the root, as also the emphasis of that speech delivered in God's own person, *I will cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up*[u], enigmatically foreshadow that this growth should not be by ordinary generation, but by creation; that as trees and plants in the first creation did merely grow up out of their mother earth, without seed precedent, so should this *Branch of righteousness*, this Root of life, take his whole substance from his earthly mother, by the sole immediate power of his heavenly Father.

Thus much of the coherence of these words with the former, the true meaning of this enigma, and of the prophet's drift and scope in this place; which is to assure Ephraim or Israel that he should share with Judah in the glory of their Messiah, as after he did in his conception and education. It remains that we prosecute the manner how this prophecy was fulfilled in the mystery of our Saviour's conception, and other

[u] Jer. xxxiii. 15.

such accidents as fell out in Israel, well deserving their speedy return.

8. The Jewish rabbins have a tradition, that God before he made this great world did try his skill in making many lesser; but this, I am sure, you all detest as a fable in itself most impious, because it impeacheth God's omnipotency; most frivolous, because prejudicial to his wisdom which worketh all things for testification of his glory or confirmation of his creatures' faith; neither of which could have any place before men and angels were created. But it is a point well fitting our meditations at this season, to consider how the Lord in sundry ages, since the first promise of man's redemption by the woman's seed, did give illustrious documents, as of his power, so of his purpose to effect this new creation; delighting to raise strength out of weakness, and by known effects of this nature to purchase unto himself that title (often inserted amongst his most glorious attributes) of *making the barren womb to bear, and become a joyful mother of children.* He foresaw, as his prophet Isaiah complains, with what difficulty the world would believe his prophets' reports of their Messias *growing up as a branch out of a dry ground:* and for this purpose he sought, by famous experiments of their conceptions that were most lively types of Him, to train up his people's hearts to a firm belief of his future strange miraculous conception.

9. *I will come unto thee* (saith the angel of the Lord to Abraham) *according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son*[x]. This message seemed so strange to Sarah, who overheard it, that she shews by her laughing how glad she could be if it might be so, rather than apprehend any probability that so it

[x] Gen. xviii. 10.

should be. Hence the angel reproves her slowness to 407
believe: *Shall any thing be hard to the Lord*[y]? And, as if it had been a matter of greater difficulty to rouse her dull faith than to quicken her dead womb, he reiterates his message again; *At the time appointed I will return unto thee, even according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.* This strange work of the Lord once accomplished was to be a perpetual sign for confirmation of his people's faith in the expectation of a far stranger, in due time to be effected: for this use Isaiah made of it: *Hear me, ye that follow after righteousness, and ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, et ad cisternam perforatam unde excisi estis*[z]: alluding unto the dead womb of Sarah, as he expounds himself in the next words: *Consider Abraham your father, and Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and increased him.* The end which the prophet aims at throughout that chapter is to rectify and establish their conceit of God's power, who was able *even of stones to raise up children unto Abraham;* intimating withal, that Christ's church, though far surpassing the amplitude of Abraham's present seed, was to be raised from materials more weak and slender in the sight of man.

10. Again, Manoah's wife had as little hopes to conceive a son as Sarah had, much less to conceive such a child or *geber* as should begin that which the *geber* here mentioned in my text was to finish, that is, to redeem Israel from the oppression of their enemies. And the angel of the Lord, desirous to avert such a mistrustful reply as Sarah had given, prevents it by insinuating his knowledge of what she could pretend; for so he begins his message: *Behold now, thou art*

y Gen. xviii. 14. z Isaiah li. 1.

barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. The child shall be a Nazarite to God from his birth: and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines[a].

As little hope was there of Hannah's barren womb, until out of the fulness of sorrow for her forlorn estate she conceives faith that God was able (as in her song she expresseth) to make the *barren bear seven children*. Perhaps she meant *Benshebang septenarium filium*, one that should be of better stead to Israel than any other seven, a governor of God's people, a lively type of her long expected Redeemer.

11. But lest these examples of Isaac's, Samson's, and Samuel's birth, all sons of barrenness, might in the fulness of time have less force upon men's hearts by reason of their distance, the Lord will have Christ's forerunner, John Baptist, to be conceived of a woman more unlikely to bear in their sight that measure all things by human probability, or experiments of present times. So strange these news did seem to Zachary his father, that when the angel told him his prayers were heard, and his wife Elisabeth should conceive and bear a son, one that should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, he is not yet satisfied, but demands, *Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife is of a great age*[b]. This distrustful demand was at this time (wherein God had determined to exact of all his people, great and small, outward confession of inward belief unto a far more strange and miraculous conception) so unseasonable and preposterous, that in sign of his power to take away the barrenness of Elisabeth's womb he seals up the priest's lips, disenabling him to bring forth one word, until his wife, according to the word of the Lord,

[a] Judges xiii. 3. 5. [b] Luke i. 18.

had brought forth her promised son. Now the famousness of this event throughout Jewry should have served for a sign to confirm men's faith of Christ's conception.

12. If one of Jerusalem's devoutest priests come so 408
far short of Abraham's readiness to believe God's promises, no marvel if the best of women bewray some spice of her mother Sarah's mistrust; but it is far from my disposition at any time, or my purpose at this, to urge further to aggravate the infirmity of a vessel so sanctified, elect, and precious: and I am persuaded the evangelist did not so much intend to disparage her's, as to confirm our belief, by relating her doubtful question, and the angel's reply; the one being but Sarah's mistrust refined with maidenly modesty, the other, Sarah's check mitigated and qualified by the angel: *After I am waxed old, and my lord also, shall I have lust*[c]? saith Sarah, as you heard before; thus checked by the angel—*Wherefore did Sarah laugh? shall any thing be hard to the Lord?* The blessed virgin, upon a more strange salutation, only demands of the angel, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man*[d]? And the angel answered her, not by way of reproof or interrogation, but for her instruction, giving her a further sign: *Behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age, and this is her sixth month, which was called barren: for with God nothing shall be impossible*[e]. This heavenly dialogue was first uttered, and in such particular sort related by St. Luke, to instruct us, that as the virgin did now with better grace and decency act that part which Sarah had before somewhat misacted, so this her Son was that promised seed whereof Isaac was but the type, and his strange and unusual

[c] Gen. xviii. 12. [d] Luke i. 34. [e] Ver. 36, 37.

conception, as it were, a *præludium* to this miraculous conception of our Saviour, foretold by Jeremiah, and thus related by the evangelist.

Instead of an exhortation or applicatory use, (which my text, being itself an exhortation directed to another people, and out of date in these our days, will hardly yield without wringing,) give me leave to spend the short remainder of time in proposing matter of admiration, especially to younger students, haply not so well acquainted with the manner of our Saviour's conception, birth, and education, or how far Israel shared with Judah, or Nazareth with Beth-lehem, in these circumstances or the like.

13. I know, by the folly of my youth, how ready young wits against this good time would be to see Menechmus, or some more quaint comedy of like errors, acted; wherein no one particular considered alone is worth the noting, only the dependence of one upon another being unusual makes the whole contrivance pleasant, yet such as can breed no firm persuasion of any historical truth, but rather bewrays itself to be a fiction: and no fiction can yield delight or pleasure, save only *ex hypothesi*, inasmuch as our imagination supposeth that as true, wherein there appeareth no repugnancy or impossibility why it might not be such as the representation makes show of: as poems usually delight more than true stories only because the poets feign a likeness or image of more amiable and admirable truths than can ordinarily be found or observed in the common course of life; yet even in their rarest inventions the orator's argument holds still true of the spectators—if they can afford applause in *re ficta*, how would the like real truth itself affect them! what would they do, if they should see a solid and substantial edifice, more beautiful and

proportional in every part than the superficial platform or draft which they so liked! Shall we then ap- 409
plaud the curious fictions of human fancy, and not be ravished with admiration at the real and most truly admirable effects of the Almighty's providence in our Saviour's conception? This would be infinitely more preposterous and fantastic, than if you should loathe or scorn the rarest live beauty of most amiable reasonable creatures, such as yourselves, and run mad with love of baboons' shadows, or for an ape or monkey's picture. What effect either so admirable in itself, or of such unspeakable consequence for our good, was ever presented on the stage of earth, seen or heard within the circumference of this mighty amphitheatre, or is possible to be conceived by the heart of man, as the birth and conception of our Saviour Christ? yet is the concurrence or contrivance of all circumstances precedent or consequent so unusual, so far surpassing human expectation, that if we compare their whole frame with the most curious form of any human invention extant, *Illam homines dicas, hanc posuisse Deum*, you will say that the one might easily be invented by such as yourselves, but that the other could not be forecast, contrived, and acted without the all-seeing wisdom of the almighty God: and I am fully persuaded that if either Jew or atheist would but search the scriptures with hearts as devoid of prejudice, and minds as free from other thoughts and cares, as most men bring to famous plays or comedies, this contemplation would enforce the one to acknowledge that prophecies in old time came not by the will of man, the other, that Jesus the Son of Mary was he of whom Moses and all the prophets spake.

14. First, Isaiah foretells the condition or estate of his mother; Micah, the place of his nativity; Jere-

miah, the place and manner of his conception; the two former, more than six, the last, five hundred years before he was conceived or born. What hopes could the blessed virgin have, either in her own or others' sight, to be the mother of so great a Monarch? You will say she was of the lineage or stock of David: so were many more, of far greater place and dignity than she, all seated in Jewry about Beth-lehem or Jerusalem, the supposed places of his conception and education, until the event did prove the contrary. Suppose old Samuel had been then living, and the governors of Judah should have presented such of the daughters of Jesse as they thought most likely, to see whom he would nominate to be their Messiah's mother; the election doubtless would have been far longer than David's was to the crown of Israel. To have sought the blessed amongst women in Galilee would have seemed more strange to the men of Judah, than the seeking out of their king amongst the sheepfolds did to Jesse and the men of Beth-lehem; but God, who sees not as man seeth, usually delighteth to cross our expectation, whether of good or bad, by contrary success. It was the absolute nullity rather than improbability of any such hopes as are now suggested, which had excluded Mary from the princely tribe, contented to live an obscure life with her husband in Nazareth, a poor city of Zabulon, as most think, or as others, bordering on Zabulon in the tribe of Naphtali; however, within the kingdom of Ephraim or Israel; and thither the angel of the Lord repairs unto her: the effect of his embassage being to unfold this enigmatical prophecy which had been sealed up until this time appointed for the fulfilling of it: *In the sixth month,* saith the evangelist,
410 *the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a*

man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David[f]. Here some profane companions captiously demand, "Seeing it was God's will to have his Son (as Isaiah had foretold) born of a pure virgin, why would he not make choice of a maid or woman unbetrothed, of whom there could be less suspicion?" As passengers of good respect would often pass by unregarded by poor cottagers, did not ill nurtured curs notify their approach by barking; so, many divine mysteries would be less observed than they are, did not profane objectors become our remembrancers: as the former captious demand, to what intent soever conceived by unbelievers, doth but solicit this answer from the orthodox; The first promise was made under this style—*Semen mulieris—The seed of the woman espoused*, though a virgin, (such as Eve was when she sinned,) *shall crush the serpent's head:* yet the mouth of profaneness, not herewith stopped, is more ready to quarrel with the message itself, as too vulgar for an ambassador of such state as the angel Gabriel. *Behold!*—what should she behold?—*thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son.* Why? do not all women conceive before they bring forth children, or do others conceive in their aprons? But to dismiss this audience of the atheist's false descant or division upon this plain-song, as he esteemed it; is the phrase, in many professed interpreters' judgment, any better than a tautology, or, at the best, than a Hebrew pleonasm? Yet even tautologies in sacred language seldom want their weight or observation; and Hebrew pleonasms in prophetical or evangelical writings are ofttimes full of mysteries. Or what if this phrase be sometimes vulgarly used in vulgar narrations, yet in extraordinary subjects it may, and by the analogy of orthodoxal interpretation ought

[f] Luke i. 26.

to be taken in the most proper and remarkable sense whereto it can literally be extended. The express mention of the usual place, συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ, excludes the ordinary cause, and implies an unusual manner of conception. The interposition of the primitive σὺ, which was emphatically expressed in the salutation, εὐλογήμενη σὺ, and must here be repeated, ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ, will much alter the sense or importance of the phrase: so doth the dependence which the demonstrative *ecce* hath with the words which went before: *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.* Καὶ ἰδοὺ συλλήψῃ [σὺ]; *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb,* [not from without.] The importance is fully equivalent to the Hebrew *teswbeb* in my text. Thy fruit shall be enclosed in thy womb; yet shalt thou not be less fruitful than she that conceiveth by a consort: for thou shalt bring forth, not a daughter, not a male child only, but such a Son as may well brook the name of Saviour; *for he shall be great, and be called the Son of the Most High*[g]: and is not this as much as *Geber*?

15. And yet God in his wisdom would have the blessed virgin herself to be for a while ignorant of this construction, that her doubtful reply might occasion the angel to enlarge his comments upon my prophet's riddle: *Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*[h]. As if he had said, 'What hast thou to do with a man, who hast found this favour with God, that it shall not be with thee as with other women? Thy conception of this thy Son is a work new and unheard of hitherto in Israel, a work not of generation but of creation; it must be wrought by the im-

[g] Luke i. 32. [h] Ver. 34.

mediate hand of God. But let it not seem so impos- 411
sible, as new and strange, seeing he hath foretold it by his prophets, who is able to bring to pass whatever he foretells.' Nor would the evangelist in my opinion have been so careful to specify the angel's name in these two stories of John Baptist's and our Saviour's conceptions, without reference to his principal message or office, which was to annunciate his birth to whom this name Gabriel did best agree, one that should be *Geber-El*, the strong God, or the strength of God.

Thus you see how this prophecy of the female's enclosing the mighty man, or heroic, by way of creation, not of generation, in the land of Israel, is in due time fulfilled, beyond her expectation that did conceive him, until the angel did instruct her.

16. And now it seems she apprehends as much as the angel had told her, and no more—*That the Lord would give the throne of David to her Son;* and whether from express notice of Ezekiel's words, or rather from the same Spirit whereby he spake, she makes part of his menacing prophecy a strain of her joyful song, so inverting his words as the Lord had done the line of David; making first last, and last first: *Exalt him that is low,* saith the prophet, *and abase him that is high*[i]. *He hath put down the mighty from their seat,* saith the blessed virgin, *and exalted them of low degree*[k]. The abasing of the high and mighty was verified whilst Ezekiel lived, in the sudden deposition of Zedekiah; so perhaps was the exalting of him that was low historically experienced in the exaltation of Jehoiachin[l], but not fulfilled until this time, wherein God from the womb of his poor handmaid raised up this light to David, unto

[i] Ezek. xxi. 26. [k] Luke i. 52. [l] 2 Kings xxv. 27.

whom the diadem [m] of right belonged. Yet all this time she thinks as little how Micah's prophecy should be fulfilled, as she had done before of Jeremiah's or Isaiah's; she had gone indeed, not long after this conception, into Jewry, to confer with her cousin Elisabeth; but, as the evangelist tells us, she was returned again to Nazareth, whence she and her husband departed a little after, against their wills: for unless Augustus at this very time had given out his commandment for taxing all that were subject to the Roman empire, there is no intimation of any purpose either in Mary or Joseph to repair to Beth-lehem-Ephratah, the city of David. But the less they minded it before, the more they are confirmed by the experience of the event, and the manner how God's prophecies are fulfilled.

17. Thus by the disposition of the Almighty, not by any purpose of Augustus or consultation of man, the Son of God is come first into his own city, but his own receive him not; he hath not so much as houseroom fit for man; an ill omen that his subjects will not acknowledge their allegiance to him. For as the Lord long since had complained of their more than brutish ignorance and stupidity—*The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known, my people hath not understood* [n]: What did not Israel know, or what would his people not understand? It is the note of a judicious convert Hebrew, (and I now remember not whether he give any further reason of it,) that the verbs ידע and התבונן there used are transitives, and must be referred to that which went before: "Israel hath not known his Owner, my people will not acknowledge him for their Master" that lies swaddled in a cratch or manger. This is a

[m] Ezek. xxi. 27. [n] Isaiah i. 3.

stumblingblock to the proud and haughty Jew, that fixeth his eyes on lofty towers and stately palaces, as if these were the places of his Messiah's birth; who in his prime must come to Zion, as one too meek and 412
humble to mind such matters; as one that would testify the place of his birth by *riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass* [o]. But though Judah and Israel be more stupid than the ox or ass, yet even in this humility of his birth Arabia and Sheba shall bring gifts to him as to their king: yet so provident is the Lord lest any hand of man should shew itself in his exaltation, that these foreign princes' open profession of allegiance to this new born child endangers his innocent and harmless life. But what will the atheist say? Cannot God protect his Son from all likelihood or approach of danger? Yes, he could; but his purpose was now to shew his wisdom, not his power, in defeating great Herod's vigilant and anxious care, and all the subtilest projects of his cunningest politicians, by the counterplots of a poor dreaming man. Rachel must have cause again to weep for her children about the borders of Benjamin; and Herod, by striking at the Son of God, must kill his own son: whilst he that was indeed a Father to all the sons of men, because the true and natural Son of God; he, in whose right Israel enjoyed the promises, and had an adoptive title to be called the Son of God, must in part of his nonage be sustained in Egypt, as Israel had been, by a Joseph; that so, what was verified of the one as in the type, might be fulfilled in the other as the substance: *Out of Egypt have I called my Son* [p].

18. But whither did God call his Son? Sure, if his supposed father Joseph do not with young Samuel mistake the Caller's voice, he was to return into Judæa,

[o] Zech. ix. 9. [p] Hosea xi. 1.

the fittest place in his apprehension for the education of him that was born unto the crown of David; a place wherein, if Herod's first designs had stood firm and sure, he might have lived securely. But God, that directed Jacob's right hand to the head of Ephraim, contrary to his father Joseph's expectation, hath turned the heart of Herod [q] on a sudden to affect him most in the last draft of his will and testament, whom he had respected but in the second place in the former; and Joseph approaching the coasts of Jewry, advertised that Herod had a successor there, not Antipas, as he perhaps with others had expected, but Archelaus, as bloody a villain as the father, suspects (as it seems) either the truth of his admonition by a dream in Egypt, or his construction of it; he doubts whether they be dead that sought the life of the child; for, as the evangelist saith, *he was afraid to go into Judæa;* χρηματισθεὶς δὲ κατ' ὄναρ, *yet seeing he had been warned in a dream* [r], (or perhaps being warned again,) though he avoid Judah, he will at least go into some part of Israel. If he had two warnings, this latter was to instruct him in the true meaning of the former, whereby he was not directed to Judæa in particular, but into the land of Israel, as I take it, with opposition to the land of Judæa; and so, saith the evangelist, he left his purpose for Judæa, and turned aside into the parts of Galilee [s], to the place of Christ's conception: and thus by his doubtful resolution the will of the Lord, which he had spoken by the prophet, is undoubtedly fulfilled; to wit, that Christ, from the place of his conception and education, should be called *Nazaræus;* a name—in their intendment that sought to fasten it first upon him—of disgrace and scorn, but by the disposition of the Almighty a known title of

[q] Josephus, lib. xvii. c. 10. p. 599. [r] Matt. ii. 22. [s] Ibid.

greatest honour, convicting such as used it otherwise, even whilst they spake it, of blasphemy, which way soever we interpret the meaning of it: for if this city's name, whose etymology is hardly found in the Old Testament, were *Natsoreth* or *Natzareth*, or, as 413
Elias Levita saith[t], *Netzer*, (the word which Isaiah useth,) it is by interpretation 'the city of plants or grafts,' in plain English *Graftown*. Whence if the Jew captiously demand, *Was it ever heard that any prophet should arise out of Nazareth?* we may answer, (as our Saviour did Pilate,) "Infidel! thou hast said it, though unwittingly, as Caiaphas thy predecessor did foretell his dying for the people: for didst thou never hear of a man whose name was *the Branch*, never of a plant *Netzer*, that should grow out of the root of Ishai? What if thou canst not revile this Jesus whom we preach, but thou must acknowledge him *Hanotzeri surculus ille*, or *surcularius ille*, or *germen illud;—the Plant, the Branch?*" For though the objector mean to disgrace him, yet God had ordained his glory as well out of his enemies' mouths, that meant him mischief, as out of the mouths of silly babes, that meant him neither good nor ill. And it is very suitable to the ways of God's providence to suggest by ambiguous words or speeches unto the attentive hearer conceits quite contrary to their meaning that utter them. So Crassus in his Parthian voyage wills his soldiers (disheartened with a dismal way, which Abgarus had led them) to be of good cheer, they should not come that way back again[u]. His meaning was, they should return a better; but they take this as the sentence of death from their general's

[t] Dicunt Christiani Jesum natum esse in Bethlehem et educatum fuisse in civitate quæ in lingua eorum Nazareth in nostra vero *Nezer* vocatur.

[u] Appian.

mouth; and so march on drooping in such dead silence to their miserable disaster as men condemned do to the place of execution. This speech of Crassus was worse taken than it was meant; but many of like observation I could here allege, which, ill meant by such as uttered them, have been well interpreted by the parties whom they concerned; as the Apollonians, soliciting aid of the Epidamnians against the Illyrians, finally put off with this flouting answer—"We will send Αἴαντα" (so was the river called which ran by their city) "to your succour[x]"—cheerfully accept the offer, and take heart and courage at the very mention of Αἴαντα, as if Ajax (who hight so in Greek) had been revived to be their leader; and their confident hopes, conceived upon the imaginary conduct of such a noble general, did by Divine Providence bring forth real success and unexpected victory: and so no doubt the faithful Hebrews, as oft as they heard the Jews call our Saviour in contempt *Hanotzeri*, did interpret their speech otherwise than they meant it, as St. John did that of Caiaphas: and this was the evangelist's meaning when he saith, our Saviour went to Nazareth, that he might be known by his name, used both by his followers and his enemies.

19. Yet do I no way reject, but most willingly embrace their interpretation of this place, who think that speech of the angel unto Samson's mother, *And he shall be a Nazarite from his birth*[y], was fulfilled of Christ, who was the true Nazarite indeed. Nor is this interpretation (as most think) incompatible with the former: both are branches of the tree of life, in both shine most glorious rays of the Divine Providence, would not men be more contradictious than their opinions. For, first, it is a needless doubt moved

[x] Val. Max. lib. i. cap. 5. pag. 24. [y] Judges xiii. 5.

by the one, whether this city's name in Hebrew were written with *Zain* or with *Tsadhi*[y]; and it is an impertinent observation of the other, to tell us that *Nazaræus* or *Nazarenus*, for a Nazarite, comes not from the Hebrew *Natzar*, but from *Nazar:* for the evangelists and Greek writers of the New Testament, not out of ignorance, but by the direction of the Holy Ghost, and of purpose, use the Hebrew names as they are mollified by the Septuagints, for the more 414
facile pronunciation of the Gentiles: as the famous Reynolds wisely admonished Junius for this reason to use *Samaria* for *Someron*, and the like, seeing the Holy Ghost had so spoken. It will suffice then for our purpose, that the words signifying an inhabitant of this city, and a Nazarite, such as Samson was, are one and the same in the Greek and Latin. As for that different character which some observe by writing the one *Naziræus* and the other *Nazaræus* or *Nazarenus*, I have just reason to suspect it for critics' coin, first invented and since observed by such as had better marked the different character of the Hebrew words whence they are derived, than the disposition of the Divine Providence in suffering no difference betwixt them in the Greek and Latin. It is a point (I know) very behoveful in arts or sciences, or human histories, to distinguish such *æquivoca a casu* as often fall out in translations, or corruption of speech, by some note of difference in the original character. But these words, *Nazaræus* or *Nazarenus*, we suppose to be *æquivoca*, not *a casu*, but *a consilio Divino*, "by the Divine Providence," which ofttimes in the ambiguity of speeches hath intendments quite contrary to the ill meaning of such as speak them; as in bad actions He usually hath an end much different from the purpose

[y] Z. TS.

of the doer. And for mine own part I never could more fully comprehend how incomprehensible God was in his wisdom, nor how inscrutable in his ways, than whilst I consider, how foreseeing from all eternities that the chief thing which either the proud or stubborn Jew, the curious Grecian, the haughty and stately politic Roman, could object against his Son, exhibited in the infirmity of our flesh, would be the meanness of his parentage and education, he could yet so dispose that he should be conceived and brought up in such a city, as if his adversaries would upbraid him with the baseness of it in Hebrew, they should withal, though unwittingly, enstyle him by that glorious name which Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah had appropriated to the Messias; that is, he should be publicly known by the name of the *Branch* or *Plant of Jesse;* or if they would nickname him from it in Greek or Latin, they should withal, though unwittingly, acknowledge him to be that Nazarite of God of whom Samson was but the type; or, to use his own words, ὃν ὁ Πατὴρ ἡγίασε[z], *illum, quem Pater sanctificavit:* thus turning the note or article of disgrace to signify the quite contrary, κατ' ἔξοχην. And for this purpose the Lord in his divine providence would have as well this title of Nazarite, *Jesus Nazarenus*, written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin capital letters upon the cross, as the title of *King*. Now we all know that even the title of *King* was by such as procured the inscription intended by way of scorn or contempt; but yet, in the Almighty's disposition, this inscription in these three famous tongues was as a public authentic proclamation of his right unto the crown of David; such a testimony that he was heir of all things in heaven and earth as shall condemn all such through-

[z] John x. 36.

out the world of rebellion as have not unfeignedly acknowledged allegiance to him, as to their supreme Lord and King. In like sort, whatsoever they intended by this title of *Nazarenus*, unto the faithful it must serve as a public and authentic testimony that Christ Jesus was the man which was to be known by the name of *Branch—the Branch of Righteousness—the Netzer of Jesse—the Nazarite—the Holy One of God.* The chief reason that moves me to embrace this interpretation is, because these two words, *Natzar* and *Nazir*, with their derivatives, or words of equivalent 415
signification, are the very titles wherein the Holy Ghost seems to delight when he describes the kingdom of Christ. His very crown is called by a word of the same root with *Nazaræus* or *Nazarenus*, the Nazarite; as, Psalm cxxxii. 18, *Upon him shall his crown flourish.* Nor do I see what can be objected against us, save only this: 'If what was said of Samson as the type be fulfilled in Christ, as in the body or substance, then Christ should have been a true Nazarite, as Samson was.' Out of doubt he was so; but as he was a true and perfect priest, though no legal priest after the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchisedec, which was more eminent and excellent; so he was a true and perfect Nazarite, (though no legal Nazarite from his birth,) or rather the perfection or *idæa* of Nazarites, and therefore to be separated from that concretion of ceremonial matters wherein the form and essence of legal Nazarites' devotion did consist. And yet, as it became the Prince and crowned King of Nazarites, the ἄλφα and ὠμέγα of Nazarites, ὁ Ναζωραῖος, or him on whose head the Nazarites' crown was to flourish, he performed the legal rites of Nazaritism by his ambassador John Baptist, in whom he set an end to those legal rites.

As for the manner of their birth, and the angelical predictions, with other occurrences, no type in scripture agrees better with the *idæa*, or *prototypon*, than Samson and John Baptist with our Saviour: how that which was literally meant of Samson may be said to be principally meant of Christ shall elsewhere (God willing) appear. I would now only request you to observe, that in some copies of the LXX it is said that Samson should be Ναζηραῖον Θεοῦ, in others (retaining the sense or exposition, not the etymology) it is said he should be ἁγιὸν Θεοῦ, or *sanctificatio Domini*, i. e. *Domino sanctificatus*. And so the Holy Ghost, when he gives us the true exposition of the Greek Ναζαρηνὸς, as by the disposition of the Divine Providence it should sound to us, extorts this confession from the unclean spirit: *What have we to do with thee, Jesus Nazarene? I know thee who thou art*—not simply ἅγιος, as it was said of Samson, but ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ Θεοῦ—*that Holy One*[a], of whom Samson and legal Nazarites were but types. Again, where it is foretold by the angel that Samson should begin to save Israel out of the hands of the Philistines, this speech, methinks, should imply a relation to some greater Saviour that was to accomplish this salvation of Israel from the hands of their enemies. And besides the spiritual redemption of them and us, (of all the Israel of God,) accomplished by Christ, and prefigured by Samson's temporal saving of them from the Philistines; to my simplicity, it seems not altogether void of observation, that as Samson was born when the Israelites were first oppressed by the Philistines, so Christ likewise was then born when Herod, an alien,

[a] Luke iv. 34. If the wicked spirit did speak this in Greek, he spake according to the use of the word *Nazarenus* in the Septuagint.

and a Philistine by birth, was tyrant as well of Judæa as Palæstina.

20. That I may conclude in one word, as I intended, with you noble stems, or other hopeful plants here seated in this famous nursery of arts, whose growth I wish in all the knowledge of foreign nations; only, in the bowels of Christ Jesus our Saviour, let me beseech you, and in his name, as his unworthy minister, charge you, that neither out of phantastic doting love to foreign nations, or natural pride of your hearts, you ever say with that Syrian courtier, "Are not Isther, Po, and Mæander, the beautified subjects of delicate Grecian or Italian wits, better than Jordan or Kedron, than all the waters of Israel?" Slander not 416
the mountains of Samaria (no not in your secret thoughts) for dry and barren in respect of Parnassus or Cytheron: but though with Ephraim you wander to view the glorious sights, or learn such choice experience as the famous monarchies of Assyria, Babylon, Greece, or Italy can afford you, yet let not your souls, which God by Christ doth woo more earnestly than he did Ephraim by my prophet, be ever affianced to these aliens; but return at length to these your cities of Israel, and visit Nazareth, wherein the Lord hath wrought his wonders, wherein the rod of Jesse sprung up. And what way soever you bend your course, take God's providence for your pilot, and let Jesus of Nazareth, the Star of Jacob, the Branch of David, and Nazarite of God, (in whom all the prophecies of different ages meet as lines in their centre, for the making up of whose glory as well the scurrilous appellations of his deadly enemies as the glorious salutations of his followers concur, as the diverse meridians of distant regions or opposite hemispheres in the pole,) be always the loadstar of your thoughts.

417 THE WOMAN A TRUE HELP TO MAN;

OR,

MANKIND'S COMFORT

FROM THE WEAKER SEX.

GALATIANS IV. 4, 5.

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

1. ALL things naturally desire their preservation. There is as true a longing of bad humours to feed and strengthen themselves by semblable nutriment, as of nature to expel them. And since the corruption of nature became in a manner natural to the sons of Adam, it hath ever been the property of it, if not altogether to loathe the food of life, yet to mingle it with such sauces as strengthen the flesh to resist the working of the spirit.

A dangerous spice of this intemperancy you may behold in these Galatians, now seeking to allay the sweet promises of the gospel, which their corrupt taste could not relish, with the bitter threats and curses of the law. The pretences used by favourers of circumcision to colour this ill compounded receipt might be more than can possibly come to this age's notice. Two more principal are sufficiently, though implicitly, notified unto us by our apostle's answers or

preventions. The former is drawn from the glorious testimonies given by God's saints to the law before the revelation of the gospel. For, taking these Jews as they were many hundreds of years before Christ was born, *the Lord hath not dealt so with any nation: as for his judgments, they had not known them*[a]. And 418
can these Galatians, by nature Gentiles, the offspring of heathens, excel Israel without observation of that law by which Israel had so far exceeded all the nations of the world?

2. But as the dawning, though in respect of former darkness it may seem as day, compared to the bright sunshine following is rather to be reputed part of night, so the state of the Jews under the law, although a freedom in respect of that thrall and ignorance wherein they had lived in Egypt, was but bondage and slavery to the liberty of the gospel. And these Galatians, in turning to the law after they had been so well entered in the gospel, renewed the Israelites' sin, who being on their way to Canaan resolved to turn back to the house of bondage whence the Lord had freed them. Or, to make the best that may be of their opinion, say they did not indeed (as in express words they did not) utterly revoke the gospel, but only couple it with the law; yet even this their error and disobedience is the very same as if the Israelites should have resolved not to use manna, which God sent them from heaven for bread, unless they might have onions and garlick and the fleshpots of Egypt for their meat.

3. The second argument wherewith these Jewish seducers had bewitched these foolish Galatians, (as we may gather from our apostle's preoccupation in this present chapter,) was muchwhat the same with

[a] Psalm cxlvii. 20.

that main charm wherewith the Roman sorcerers so mightily prevail with the ignorant of our times.

These or the like queries you may imagine were often propounded to these late converts by the Jews: "Whose successors would Paul, would Apollos, would others, which abandon circumcision or the ceremonial law, be reputed? Do they not call themselves the children of prophets? Would they not be accounted the sons of God's chosen people? And what religion (I pray) did the prophets or their godly forefathers profess? Did they not all subscribe to the ceremonies given by Moses? Did they not live and die in these practices which we persuade you to? And so living, and so dying, did they live or die like slaves or bondmen, or as freeborn sons of Abraham, and heirs of the everlasting promises?"

4. To bring this controversy between our apostle and these seducers to a more short and distinct issue. First, they agree that only such as lived under the law were the true church and people of God; secondly, that only the true church and people of God were the sons of Abraham, and heirs of the everlasting promises. But from these grants or suppositions our apostle thus infers:

As every other heir, so the church of God was to have a time of nonage before she could come to her full age, or be instated in the inheritance bequeathed; that during this nonage, the state or condition of God's church and people, as of all other heirs in their childhood, did nothing differ from the condition of servants. Whence again it will follow, that as the authority of tutors, of guardians, and feoffees in trust, (though for the times being most absolute,) is utterly to expire and determine at the time by the testator or donor appointed for the heir to enter upon his inherit-

ance; so the law of ordinances which God himself had given by Moses, though during the time of the church's nonage most absolute and sovereign, was to be repealed and cancelled at the fulness of time, i. e. at the time 419 appointed by God for the full age of the church. Where it will be no digression by the way to observe, that the period of other heirs' nonage was not always precisely determined by human laws, but might be longer or shorter, according to the appointment of the donor. Lastly, as secular heirs, by not entering upon their inheritance at the time appointed, do much prejudice their title, and deserve (as we say) to be begged for fools, so the church and people of God, by not abandoning the yoke of the law at the time appointed by God for their full age, did thereby make themselves uncapable of the blessing bestowed on them in the gospel.

5. This is the point most pressed by our apostle in this and the chapter following: *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again by the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace*[b].

Now that which determined the church's nonage, and did, *ipso facto*, extinguish the sovereign authority of the law, was the sending forth of the Son of God, who was heir of all things. *But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adop-*

[b] Galatians v. 1—4.

tion of sons. Or, according to the dialect of our English law, that the inheritance of sons might be conveyed or made over unto us, (for so much the Greek ἀπολαμβάνει may import,) and it was to be conveyed unto us, not by right of birth, (all of us being children of wrath,) but by adoption. Now adoption is the ingraffing of a foreigner into a better stock or family. The only stock whereinto we (which were not sons, but servants) could be ingraffed was the true and natural Son of God. He alone could set Gentiles free from the bondage of sin, and Jews from the curse of the law, *which was added because of transgression.* The sum then of our apostle's doctrine in this place is the same with our Saviour's: *Verily, verily, I say unto you,* (that boast of Abraham's seed, and never were in subjection to any, *to you, I say,*) *That whoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed*[e].

6. Referring the act of redemption, and this glorious prerogative of being the sons of God, unto some better occasion, give me leave, first, to unfold what the Son of God hath done for his part, that he might be a perfect and unpartial Redeemer; secondly, what is on our parts required that we might be capable of his redemption.

In the former, I shall endeavour to stir up admiration at the wisdom and love of God; the use whereof shall be to kindle love and thankfulness in ourselves, and to incite our alacrity in performing such duties as are required at our hands.

The sum of that which the Son of God hath under-

[e] John viii. 34—36.

taken for us is by our apostle gathered to these three heads:

1. *He was sent forth into the world.*
2. *He was made of a woman.*
3. *He was made under the law.*

Of these in their order: and of their several necessities and conveniences.

To be a son, necessarily presupposeth a begetting. If then we be the sons of God, we must be begotten by 420
him; and of us, that are his children by adoption, saith St. James, *He begat us with the word of truth, that we should be the firstfruits of his creatures*[d]. This *word of truth*, by which we must be begotten, must first be conceived by us, and yet it is the principal of those good and *perfect gifts* all and every one of which (as the same apostle speaks) are *from above, and descend to us from the Father of light*[e]. But who shall ascend up into heaven to fetch them thence? *No man* (saith our Saviour) *ascendeth up to heaven, but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man which is in heaven*[f]. When he discoursed of heavenly mysteries, *he spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen;* others spake but by guess or hearsay, as they had been taught: *No man* (saith St. John) *hath seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, which was in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*[g]. Being in the bosom of the Father from everlasting, he could not but know him, and his will concerning man from everlasting. But so long as he remained in the bosom of God, not manifested to the world, we could no more approach the place of his dwelling than we could the dwelling of his Father, we were as uncapable of his instructions as of his Father's.

[d] James i. 18. [e] Ver. 17. [f] John iii. 13. [g] Chap. i. 18.

7. Requisite therefore it was he should be sent forth, that he might be our Teacher; such a mature authentic Teacher, as saving truth, able to beget sons unto God, should issue as naturally from his mouth as ripe seed, apt for propagation, doth from fruitful trees. From this his efficacy in teaching did the people admire God speaking in him, *for he taught not as the Scribes and Pharisees, but as one that had authority*[h]; being indeed the author of that doctrine which he taught; one from whose fulness all former teachers had received their measure of knowledge. Moses himself, that gave the law, much more the Scribes and Pharisees, the expounders of it, were but as ordinary schoolmasters; their best auditors but as schoolboys, or grammar-scholars, labouring all their lifetimes to learn the first rudiments or elements of saving knowledge. But after the Divine Word had spoken to the world by the mouth of man, *great was the number of preachers: He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers*[i]; of such mysteries as no secular artists, nor children of prophets, could ever attain unto; nor did they which taught the world these mysteries learn them by rule or method.

8. But you will say, 'All this might have been done, although he had been sent in the form of an angel, wherein he appeared unto the fathers. He that taught Moses without the substance of man could have taught the apostles and evangelists the whole doctrine of the gospel, although he had not been born of a woman: he that overthrew Pharaoh and all his host in the Red sea, put the Canaanites and other enemies of Israel to flight, by his sole invisible presence, could not he have vanquished sin and Satan without the

[h] Matt. vii. 29. [i] Ephes. iv. 11.

assumption of our nature? doth the flesh add strength unto the spirit?'

The question is, not what he could have done by his almighty power, but what in his wisdom was most fit and convenient for our redemption. Now, this we say, that by the eternal rules of equity, which God observes in all his ways, it was not only convenient but necessary, (though not for our instruction, yet for our redemption and sanctification,) that his Son should be not only man, but man *made of a woman:* and our apostle in saying thus, saith a great deal more than if he had said *born of a woman.*

9. Every man except the first man Adam is born of 421
a woman, but no man besides the Son of God, by whom man and all things were made, was made of a woman. The mysteries contained in this manner of speech cannot be duly valued or unfolded without some explication of that peculiar reference which these words, in the apostle's intent and meaning, have to the first creation of man and woman.

10. And here I must entreat you of the weaker sex to observe with me, that our apostle, as well to put you in mind of that duty which you owe to your husbands, as also to stir up your thankfulness towards God for your redemption, still refers you to the manner of your mother Eve's creation and transgression. Two testimonies shall at this time suffice for the establishing of this truth, both taken from our apostle's writings: of which, the one best expounds the true force and meaning of this phrase, *made of a woman*, the other unfolds the mystery therein contained.

The former is, 1 Cor. xi. 7, &c.: *For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory*

of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. Thus he derives your subordination to your husbands from the first original of your sex: this method and manner of instruction he learned from our Saviour, who resolved the difficulty proposed concerning divorce, from the canon or institution of matrimony enacted by God, with Adam's consent and voice, whilst Eve was formed. Nevertheless, to qualify and moderate this authority which the man by priority of creation hath over the woman, the apostle adds; *Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord: for as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God*[k]. The first woman, then, was made of the first man; all men since have come into the world by the woman; but the Son of God came not only by the woman, but was *made of the woman,* as the first woman was of the first man. This great mystery was precisely foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, though not so plainly as many at the first sight would observe it: *The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man;* or, *The female shall enclose the male,* or *man of strength*[l]*:* it is called a new creation with reference to the first creation, wherein the woman was enclosed in the man; as here, quite contrary, the man is enclosed in the woman by the immediate hand of God, conceived and born without any concurrence of man; as the first woman was brought forth out of the substance of man without the help or consort of a woman.

11. The second place in our apostle's writings which truliest explicates the meaning of the mystery con-

[k] 1 Cor. xi. 11. [l] Jerem. xxxi. 22.

tained here in my text, or in the place of Jeremiah last cited, and best sets forth the incomprehensible wisdom of God's proceedings in the admirable work of man's redemption, is, 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12; *Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.* Why is her usurpation of authority over the man so insufferable? The reason in the next words is given in part from the order of her creation, *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.* This proves that she should have been under man's authority though neither he nor she had sinned; but the principal reason why she is put to silence, especially in the 422
church, is from the manner of her transgression, in the verse following: *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression;* because she had boldly adventured to hold parley with the old serpent without her husband's leave, and contracted, with so great danger to all mankind, without his instructions; because, this done, she took upon her to be the serpent's agent to bring over her husband (whom she was to counsel when her advice was demanded, not to lead) into the same combination: therefore is this modesty and silence, which the apostle speaks of, enjoined the whole sex by way of punishment, or at least to put them in mind of their mother's first transgression; for Eve's disease or surfeit of the forbidden fruit (until God in his infinite wisdom found out a sovereign remedy by the contrary) was more dangerous and prejudicious to the whole sex than Adam's was to his sons.

This truth is included in the last clause of our apostle's discourse concerning this point, 1 Tim. ii. 15. *Nevertheless she shall be saved.* This adversative particle *nevertheless* supposeth a tacit objection, this

or the like: 'But is there no means left for Eve's salvation, as well as for Adam's, though she only were seduced by the serpent? or shall not the woman which is in subjection be saved as well as the man which hath authority over her? Yes; she shall be saved too; but by what means? διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, *through childbearing:* but, alas! what shall then become of the barren womb, or of her that beareth no children?'

12. Cornelius a Lapide, a late Jesuit, would have the pains of childbirth to be in this place established as a purgatory, without which this sex could not enter into heaven. Must then the excessive or extraordinary sufferings of some mothers supererogate for other women that bear no children? I shall not need to trouble myself with removing this stone of offence, which can stumble none but the daughters of the blind church; I will pass over it, and proceed: As this place of Timothy best expounds the words of my text, so may these words in it, διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, best be expounded by another place in this epistle, wherein the apostle, discoursing of that promise of God to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*[m], excellently observes, (what the matter and circumstance of the text, not the grammatical singularity of number, doth necessarily infer,) This is not spoken *to his seed as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ*[n]. To comment therefore upon St. Paul by the analogy of his comments upon Moses; he saith not in this place, *the woman shall be saved through bearing of children,* as speaking of many, but *through her childbirth;* as meaning one, which is Christ the Son of God, *made of a woman* without man.

13. It is usual with the Hebrews to put the abstract

[m] Gen. xxii. 18. [n] Gal. iii. 16.

for the concrete, substantives for adjectives: *Cause our captivity to return like the rivers in the south*[o]; that is, bring home our captives with speed: so *salvation* is often put for *saviour*, *glory* for *glorious*, *justice* for *just*, &c. Now by the same privilege which admitteth *captivity* for *captives*, or *sanctificatio Domini* for *Domini sanctificatus*, must τεκνογονία, *childbirth*, go in this place for as much as τὸ τέκνον γεννηθέν: σωθήσεται διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας is all one with σωθήσεται διὰ τοῦ τέκνου γεννηθέντος, *she shall be saved by her child.* Briefly, the woman's *childbirth* is as much as the woman's *child*, and the woman's *child* is somewhat more than the woman's *seed;* for that the woman's 423
seed which was to crush the serpent's head should become a child, and be brought forth by his mother, not conceived only, is no paradox of our invention; it was the meaning of God's promise when first he made it, that this seed should be such a child, so conceived and brought forth, as might truly call a woman his mother, but no man on earth his father.

14. To give you a more distinct view of God's wisdom in contriving the means of our salvation. The first woman, by yielding her consent to the wicked spirit, eats of the forbidden fruit, in hope she and her husband should become gods, and their offspring like young gods, knowing good and evil: the issue of this adulterous compact with the serpent was, that she conceived sin, and brought forth death, before she was a mother of children; and her children with their posterity were by nature the sons of wrath, the serpent's seed, and heirs of his everlasting curse. To cure this malady by the contrary, God in his wisdom so ordains, that another of the weaker sex, of a temper quite contrary to her mother Eve—one as lowly as she was

[o] Psalm cxxvi. 4.

proud, whom the old serpent had never tempted with dreams of being a queen, much less of being a goddess on earth—one whose spirit rejoiced in the lowly estate of an handmaid, should, by yielding consent to the blessed Spirit, conceive him that was the Son of God, the Tree of life, in whom as many as believe receive the adoption of sons, and are coheirs with him of everlasting bliss. No marvel if the issues of their consents should be so contrary, whenas the principal agents with whom they contracted were such opposites; the one was the SPIRIT of TRUTH, the Author of life, and GOD of LIGHT; the other, the *spirit of falsehood*, the *father of lies*, and *prince of darkness*. Lastly, the first woman did thus adulterate her soul by contracting with Satan without advice or consent of her husband: and this is that which made her estate and the state of her sex far more desperate than Adam's was: for, as divines observe, the wicked angels, because they sinned wittingly and willingly, without a tempter, are left without all means of a mediator or redeemer: now the woman, in that she did partake more deeply of this their sin, (for being tempted by them she forthwith turned tempter with them,) was more liable to their remediless punishments than the man, until the Lord in mercy found out the means here mentioned by our apostle to relieve her. The conclusion intended by him in that discourse is to assure womankind, that Eve's assenting to Satan (without the advice of her husband) was not more available to condemn the sex, than the blessed virgin's bringing forth of her first-born, whom she conceived by mere reliance on God's promise, without the concurrence or furtherance of man, was to redeem it.

15. This exposition of the place in Timothy is so clear and natural, that not the meanest student here

present (so he will mark the former references to the first creation) but may well wonder how any professed interpreter could omit it. Imagine with me that the whole tenor of this assurance, devised in terms most exquisite for security and comfort of the weaker sex, were to be perused by any ordinary lawyer but with half the diligence men use to examine leases or other evidences concerning their private commodities, the principal clause or demise itself would at first sight appear to be contained in these words, σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ 424
τῆς τεκνογονίας. It would likewise be as apparent, that *faith, love, holiness, sobriety,* and *temperance,* did follow only by way of condition or proviso: or, to speak in our own dialect, seeing *faith, love,* &c. are added as conditions or qualifications on the woman's part, who is the subject or patient, the means or meritorious cause of salvation being emphatically assigned under scholastic character in the clause precedent, σωθήσεται διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας: this hath always seemed to me a demonstration as evident as any can be, *ab effectu,* that the principal object or foundation of saving faith (*the promised woman's seed*) must needs be comprised in the word τεκνογονία. *In Jesus Christ,* saith the apostle, *neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love*[p]: but neither love, nor faith working by love, can avail more without Christ Jesus than circumcision in Christ Jesus; and bootless it had been to have added this conditional, *if they continue in faith,* &c., unless the foundation of faith and salvation had been comprised in the former words, *She shall be saved by her childbirth.* Now as fidelity, chastity, and practices of charity are necessary to all, but in a peculiar and remarkable sort necessary to those whose forefathers

p Gal. v. 6.

have been perfidious, adulterers, and oppressors; so, albeit none can be saved without these virtues here mentioned, (*faith, charity, holiness, temperance,*) yet are these peculiarly necessary to the weaker sex, in respect of the first woman's sin; to the several parts or degrees whereof they are most divinely and accurately suited and ranked by our apostle. One part of her transgression (perhaps the first) was infidelity, or distrust to God's threats and promises; therefore it is required as a condition necessary to all women, ἵνα μείνωσιν ἐν πίστει, *that they be constant in faith*: another part of the first woman's sin (besides disloyalty) was breach of that social love which by order of creation was due unto her husband; for as she had beginning of being from him, so she was not to have contracted any business concerning her estate without him; she should have known his consent before she had presumed to have passed her's; and because she did not so, but brake the bond of social love, it is required of all women *that they continue in love.*

16. Again, the first woman polluted her soul with spiritual adultery by listening to Satan's impious suggestions: hence it is required of the weaker sex, that they continue in *holiness* and *chastity:* the clasp that must keep all these ornaments or spiritual habits close about them is *temperance;* for so the apostle concludes: *Notwithstanding they shall be saved, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with temperance:* as if he had said, "It was their mother Eve's intemperate appetite of the forbidden fruit, fair in show, which did quicken and give life unto the first transgression, whose first seed, perhaps, was pride; and for this reason continent eyes and temperate appetites are on the woman's part required in the last place, as subjection is in the first." For conclusion of this

point; as this catalogue of virtues in the last clause hath express reference to the several parts of her transgression, so have these words, σωθήσεται δὲ διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, as peculiar relation unto the promise concerning the woman's seed, *which was to bruise the serpent's head* [q].

17. I shall not need to trouble this learned audience with a doctrine very frequent, because most useful in the primitive church: a necessity was laid upon the reverend fathers of those times to use this place as 425
one amongst many most pregnant for refutation of such heretics as held our Saviour did take only the shape and figure, not the true flesh and substance of man from his mother. But seeing their heresies have for these many years slept with their bodies, I hold it a sin to awake them by entertaining any solemn dispute with them, or making loud declamation against them: taking the truth, which these men are not able now to contradict, for unquestionable, (as being the principal subject of all Christian knowledge,) their observation is neither unnecessary for any time, nor impertinent to this present occasion, who out of this phrase, MADE OF A WOMAN, would give us the true MEDIUM, or causal demonstration of another conclusion, essentially subordinate to the forecited observation of the ancient: the conclusion is, that our Saviour did, with the substance or flesh of man, take upon him all the infirmities and weaknesses of our mortal flesh.

18. The heathens, although they feigned Pallas to be a goddess, yet conceived her to be of a masculine valour and true heroical spirit, as being wholly conceived and born of Jupiter's substance, not participating of Juno's nature or disposition. That *wisdom* in

q Gen. iii. 15.

form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief[s].

19. Marriage well fitted is a kind of music, and consists in a true consort of the stronger and weaker sex: but in this happy marriage betwixt HEAVEN and EARTH, between the divine and human nature, the Son of God and the seed of Abraham, there is a consort of contrarieties (of strength and weakness) in their abstracts: he that was *Geber-el*, "the strength of God," is indissolubly linked with the weakness of man, 426
with the flesh and substance of a woman. He of whom God might have said, as Jacob did of Reuben before his fall, *My first-born, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power*[t], is become (sin only excepted) like unto Reuben when his dignity was gone, *unstable as water;* the Son of God (not by adoption, but by eternal generation) is sent forth, *made of a woman*, and thereby subjected to more infirmities than any man before him had been, or after can be; strength was thus to stoop to weakness, that weakness might become strong; and eternity to match with mortality, that our mortal bodies might be immortal: for as man and wife are one flesh, so much more the Son of God and the woman's seed make but one Christ; and in this consort the spouse or weaker nature, *coruscat Mariti titulis*, is really dignified with these late mentioned or the like titles of her lord and husband. Strength is now become her girdle, and immortality her wedding garment; freedom, joy, and happiness everlasting are made her jointure, whose former state was mortality charged with servitude and infirmities.

[s] Isaiah liii. 2. [t] Gen. xlix. 3.

20. The former observation concerning the importance of the word *mulier* here used, though in my opinion not impertinent to our apostle's meaning, may in better judgments seem rather to increase than diminish a common difficulty. First, were his meaning such as we suppose it, he had said better, γενόμενον ἐκ θήλεος, than ἐκ γυναικὸς; *factum ex fœmina*, rather than *ex muliere:* for *fœmina* being the proper name of the weaker sex seems to import fragility more directly than *mulier* doth: besides, this phrase, *factum ex fœmina*, would have well consorted with that principal article of our belief, "He was made and born of a virgin;" with which this form of speech in my text, *factum ex muliere*, may seem scarce compatible; for *virgo* and *fœmina* are subordinate, every *virgo* is *fœmina;* but *virgo* and *mulier*, or γυνὴ and παρθένος, are rather opposites: some learned interpreters, notwithstanding, have observed the Greek γυνὴ to be sometimes taken for παρθένος, as *mulier* likewise in the Latin is for *virgo:* and why might not the apostle use the like language? Yet in saying thus much and no more, they make the manner of his speech more capable of excuse than meritorious of admiration; whereas to my apprehension there lies a mystery in the word γυνὴ, as here it is used by the apostle, which had not been so well expressed, either by the common name of the sex, θήλυς, *fœmina*, or by παρθένος, *virgo*.

For better notification of what I conceive, you are to consider that *virgo* and *mulier* (as the words answering to them in the Greek) have two significations, or rather importances; *virgo* sometimes implies no more than *fœminam intactam*, or *viri ignaram*, "a woman that knows not a man;" sometimes it signifies, *fœminam intactam, nec desponsatam*, "a woman not betrothed:" *mulier* likewise implies sometimes an op-

position to the first importance or signification of *virgo*, and signifieth as much as *fœminam corruptam*, or *viri gnaram;* sometimes it imports no more than *fœminam viro desponsatam;* and this later use or importance, whether of the Latin *mulier* or of the Greek γυνὴ, is not opposite, but coincident to the second use or importance of *virgo*, or παρθένος: one and the same *fœmina* may be *intacta*, and yet *desponsata*, a wife or woman betrothed unto a man, and yet a virgin. So Eve is called by the Septuagint γυνὴ, (in the original, *ishah*,) "a wife," at her first creation; matrimony itself was established in her extraction out of Adam's 427
side; in this sense she was *mulier*, "a wife," when she committed the first transgression, and yet παρθένος, or *fœmina intacta*, a virgin too; for she did not know her husband before she had contaminated her soul with lusting after the serpent's baits; and for this reason would the Wisdom of God be made man of a virgin, and yet withal *ex muliere*, of a virgin betrothed unto a husband, that Eve's miscarriage might be regained in her. Eve was created to be a help to Adam, but proved his ruin: the blessed virgin must likewise be solemnly consecrated for a help to man, but so consecrated becomes a comforter, not to Joseph only, but to all his brethren, to all the Israel of God, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

21. For the Wisdom of God thus solicitously and accurately to contrive and plot the means of mankind's redemption, it was expedient and necessary, in respect of that inbred superstition wherewith both Jews and Gentiles were deeply tainted: all of us, from our cradle, from the womb, are sick of our mother Eve's disease; prone, upon every light accidental circumstance, or want of ceremonial references, to pick occasion when none is offered, to distrust God's promises for our good:

the subtilty of the old serpent continues still the same, rather increased by long experience than impaired by age; no sophister so captious, no lawyer so cunning as he, to mispersuade men, either that the instruments of their assurance want words to carry the inheritance unto all, or that their Redeemer is unable or unwilling to instate them in it; or that some at least, in respect of their particular condition or state of life, are uncapable of the good intended. For preventing this his cunning hath God in his wisdom encompassed and hedged in all mankind with such a world of references and admirable alliances unto his Son made man of a woman, as no sort or condition of men (that frame their aspect aright) can suspect themselves to be excluded; every circumstance of his person, conception, birth, and life, are suited, as it were of purpose, to give check unto the utmost curiosity of superstitious human fancy.

22. Had our Redeemer been only man, though a man much more after God's own heart than his father David was, we would have said of him as we do of a friend whose mind we know to be better than his means; 'Surely he wisheth me well, and would lay down his life to do me good; but being once dead, what dominion can he have over death? or raised again, yet being far absent in the highest heavens, how shall he guard me against Satan and his angels, still present to assault me here on earth?' Again, had he been only the Son of God, we would have conceived of him as we do of many great ones, whom we acknowledge to be honourably disposed, but not so tenderly compassionate of poor men's cases as might be wished, because they have no acquaintance with poverty or the miseries that attend it. To prevent these temptations to distrust, God would have his only Son to be

made *a Man of sorrows*, and of entire acquaintance with grief, a man subject to greater bodily vexations than any in this life can taste; and yet at last to be exalted according to his human nature unto glory, that we might have a solicitor in the court of heaven, of our own corporation and stock; one that could pity our wants and compassionate our grievances, by the lively experience and never fading memory of his own more grievous sufferings whilst he lived on earth; able withal to plead our deliverance from danger, out of that infinite Wisdom which he is, and to procure it by 428
that infinite favour and respect which he hath with his Father from everlasting.

23. Or if the Son of God had been made man, as Adam was, of the earth, or not thus miraculously made of a woman, the old serpent might easily have brought the weaker sex into a relapse of their native distrust unto God's promises; fear, if not despair, would in temptations have overtaken them, lest Christ had been sent forth to redeem the man only whose sex he assumed, not silly woman, to whom he had no special reference. Or had he been made MAN of a virgin only, not of a wife or woman betrothed to a husband, married persons might have mistrusted, lest matrimony had made them more capable of their first parents' curse than of the blessing made in the promised seed, or lest the conjunction of twain in one flesh might have caused a divorce of both from him, unto whom whosoever is conjoined *is made one spirit with him*[u]. Now that the world might know marriage to be *honourable among all men*, and that the bonds of undefiled wedlock are no fetters to the soul, it pleased the Wisdom of God to be conceived in wedlock, and born of a virgin affianced to a man. On the

[u] 1 Cor. vi. 17.

vagabonds and fugitives from his presence. Indeed the greatest part of the circumcision proved Cain's brethren in the event: but that God did not by circumcision mark them to exile and slaughter is sufficiently manifested, in that he caused his only Son to be circumcised. So then he is circumcised and made under the law, that such as were of the circumcision and under the law might have full assurance he was sent forth to be their Redeemer. Yet had he been conceived in the same province wherein he was born and circumcised, the ten tribes, or kingdom of Israel, might well have doubted whether God's promises had not been entailed unto the tribe of Judah; whether their foreelders had not released their interest in them, and forespoken all their posterity's hopes, by that desperate and unhappy speech which fell from them when they first revolted from Rehoboam: *What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse*[a].

26. This or the like temptation, upon whatsoever ground conceived, wrought strongly with this people whilst they remained in captivity; and for this reason, when God persuades them to return with Judah into the land of promise, he is enforced to promise them by the prophet Jeremiah, that the expected Messias (for whose birth Micah had taken up Bethlehem) should be conceived and *made* of a *woman* in the land of Israel. To this purpose I have heretofore, out of this place, expounded that passage, Jer. xxxi. 21, 22: *Turn again, O virgin of Israel,* &c. *For the Lord hath created a new thing* (not in the *earth*, or wide world, at random, but) *in thy land, The female shall enclose the male.* His speech is full, and yet precise and wary: for he

[a] 1 Kings xii. 16.

was only *enclosed* in the land of Israel, and brought forth in Judah.

27. But the better right or title these circumstances of Christ's conception, birth, or circumcision, convey either to the kingdom of Israel or Judah severally, or jointly to the whole seed of Abraham after the flesh, the less hope could we Gentiles have of any portion in the Son of Jesse, had not the Lord, out of his infinite mercy and wisdom, made the covenant of life and blessing with Abraham, before he took upon him the mark of circumcision; that is, before there was any legal distinction between the Jew and Gentile. This is a point so admirably pressed by the great 430
apostle of the Gentiles for their comfort, that it shall suffice me to quote some few passages of his comments upon Moses' narrations, which I can never read without admiration and secret joy of heart: *And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham*[b]. As he had said to the like purpose before: *Abraham believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they that be of faith, the same are the children of Abraham*[c].

The true issue, or κρινόμενον, of that great controversy between him and his countrymen, is, 'Whether circumcision and observance of that law whereby the Jew was distinguished from the Gentile, or BELIEF in God's promises concerning the seed to come, did make men sons of Abraham and of blessing.' Our apostle's plea for BELIEF is unanswerable, because Abraham, by *believing God*, received the promises in

[b] Galatians iii. 8, 9. [c] Ver. 6, 7.

the name and behoof of the nations, before he received the sign of circumcision: which may hence be argued to be no infallible sign of *blessing*, in that it was imparted as well to Ishmael, Abraham's son according to the flesh, as unto Isaac, who was the son of promise. Much less could the observance of the law, which was not given till four hundred and thirty years after the former covenant was established, make men sons of Abraham, and of blessing. *Covenants*, which receive their whole strength and virtue from the will or purpose of men, *being once confirmed, no man may disannul, or add aught to them.* The contractors themselves must change their minds, or revoke their mutual consents, before any other may correct or change their deeds. But God's promise for man's good can neither change of itself, nor be changed by any. Yet had Abraham not God's promise only, but his solemn oath *to assure the inheritance of blessing to him and his seed.* There is no mention of any release on Abraham's part; and it were impiety to think that God, without some release made by him whilst he lived, would be so injurious as to retract or alter the covenant after his death. Or shall a title immediately grounded on his solemn oath whose word alone gives strength and being to all things that are, (even power and authority to laws themselves,) need the corroboration of any law? To what end then was the law given so long after Abraham's death? that his posterity might plead their title by it to the inheritance before promised? This is that which our apostle prosecutes with such deep but just indignation throughout this discourse. For this was in effect to distrust God's oath, and for their parts utterly to renounce all interest in the covenant made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

[d] Galatians iii. 15.

by seeking thus to draw the free donor into new legal bonds with Moses. Yet if the law added nothing to their former assurance, the question still remains, why it was given? the apostle resolves us, *It was added because of transgression*[e]. In which words he would give us to understand, that the whole world was *quoad rem*, for its present estate or condition, under the curse denounced against Adam: the best of whose children were heirs of blessing only *quoad spem;* the life of our hope or expectation being in the promised seed, which was to come into the world. In the interim, till his coming, God gave his law to Abraham's seed after the flesh, that the threats and curses contained in it might imprint a lively sense and feeling of that first curse under which the whole world stood: and that 431
the sense or feeling hereof might bring forth a more eager longing after the second Adam, or promised seed, who was to propagate the blessing unto mankind: who being manifested in the flesh, was to redeem all from that curse which had befallen the whole nature in Adam; and being made under the law, was to redeem the seed of Abraham from the particular curses of the Mosaical or ceremonial law. This law then, whilst it lasted, concurred no otherwise to the adoption of sons than privation doth to the constitution of natural bodies: it was *principium transmutationis, non constitutionis,* "to vanish out of the world whiles the world was regenerated." The principal point whereat our apostle aims in this epistle is to ascertain both Jew and Gentile, that their deliverance from the forementioned curses was on their parts to be expected, by the same means, and upon the same conditions, that the promise of blessing had been established with Abraham. This is the main conclu-

[e] Galatians iii. 19.

sion: *Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise*[f].

28. Thus you have heard, rudely and briefly, what the Son of God for his part hath done, that he might be a perfect Redeemer, and unpartial Mediator between God and man: and you know what on our part is required for the accomplishing of our redemption—Abraham's faith. Now were it as well known what it is truly to believe, as that true belief is on our parts only requisite for attaining the blessing promised to Abraham and to his seed, most of our ministerial labours were at an end. But my time for provision hath been so short, and my opportunities for intentive meditations in this short time so few, that I could not hope either much to amend the characters of larger comments to this purpose, or that these unrefined should make any better impression whiles I utter them in your ears, than they have done or may do, whiles you read them, in your eyes. I was the willinger to spend the whole time now allotted in laying these foundations, because men usually expect strength rather than curiosity of workmanship in foundations scarce brought above ground. Howbeit, no man would willingly thatch upon a strong foundation, though rude and plain. And a better cover I could not in this

[f] Galatians iii. 24—29.

exigence provide, if I should make up the structure or application. All I have to say unto you is by way of request, that as often as you shall compare, or hear lively faith compared unto a tree, and good works unto the fruit, you would vouchsafe to take this note of remembrance from me:—*Faith* is a plant of Paradise, which comes not up by generation, but is herein truly like to trees of the first creation, that it doth not send forth leaves before blossoms, nor blossom before it bring forth fruit, for it hath his fruit created in it. If you further demand what be the proper fruits of true belief, as it is fixed on this peculiar object or article of faith, *the Son of God, Abraham's seed, made of a woman,* he himself hath resolved you; they are, *poverty in spirit—godly sorrow—meekness—hunger and thirst after righteousness—mercifulness—purity of hearts*[g], &c. For that blessedness which 432
God did promise without a sequester or mediator unto faithful Abraham, and in him to all true believers, is by this Son of God and sole Fountain of all blessings promised, expressly bequeathed with the mouth of man, unto *the poor in spirit*—to *mourners*—to *the meek*—to *the merciful* and *pure in heart.* Albeit the denominations be much different, yet these qualifications differ no more from Abraham's faith than fractions or parcels do from their proper *integrums.* To believe in Christ made of a virgin, is to have him fashioned in our hearts, whose whole life and conversation was a pattern of such practices as he there commends unto us in the beginning of the evangelical jubilee. Now, did we put him on as truly in our daily conversation as we have done by profession at our baptism, we might be as well known to be sons of adoption by these Christian habits, as academics or

g Matt. v. 1, &c.

graduates by our weeds and ornaments. But if we should make inquiry after the first parcel or fraction of true faith in Christ (such lowliness of mind and spirit as was in the blessed virgin which conceived him) amongst the rich and mighty, we may perhaps find some shadow of it in their outward compliment, like a beggar at a potentate's gate, within which he may not enter: to give harbour or lodging to such a base guest in their hearts is a disparagement to their greatness. Even poverty herself may bewail the paucity of the poor in spirit amongst her children. Such as have been mightily humbled by potent adversaries have juster occasion to lament the want of true humility in their breasts, than the abundance of grievances or heavy burdens which others lay upon their backs. For the most of us, seeing we make our mouths issues either of bitterness, scurrility, corrupt communication, or of jesting, which is not comely, shall we not sin against our own souls, and give the Spirit of God the lie, if we say we are pure in heart? Yet, saith St. John, *Every one that hath this hope in him* (of being the sons of God by adoption in this life, and of seeing God in the life to come) *doth purify himself, as he is pure*[h]. What shall we say then? *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make us clean:* but, alas! how often wouldst thou have purified us, and we would not be purified! Yet grant, MOST GRACIOUS FATHER, we beseech thee, that our particular wills and desires may evermore want success, rather than their accomplishment should defeat or frustrate our general desire of being blessed with faithful Abraham. Accept this, good Lord, we entreat thee, for our final desire, and let it be registered in everlasting records, as our last will and testament—*Not as we will, but as thou wilt:* for our wills are

[h] 1 John iii. 3.

tainted with corruption, and naturally tend unto destruction; or though they be sometimes set aright, and freed from error in their actual choice, yet their choice is always subject to change, as variable as temptations are various. But as thou art, so is thy *will*, most holy and righteous, *without shadow of change, a will of life and salvation.* Lord, let not these our corruptible wills, but this thy everlasting will be fulfilled in us. As thou hast promised blessedness to faithful Abraham, and in him to all believers, so, we beseech thee, bless us with true belief, with lowliness of spirit, with meekness, with purity of heart, and with whatsoever other fruits of faith to which thy Son our Saviour hath bequeathed his blessing.

have been seen in their horizon. Now that it did so appear, or might have been seen in that horizon, is not apparent from any circumstance in the text. It were a better query, (could we hope to find out the distinct truth,) how these Gentiles did, or could possibly discern, from the apparition of a new star, that the promised King of the Jews was now born? The usual answer to this query is, that they had this prenotion from the prophecy of Balaam, Numbers xxiv. 17; *There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.* But how should these wisé men know that this star which they had seen in the east was that star of Jacob which Balaam foreprophesied should arise? Some hence collect or suppose that those *magi*, or wise men, were Balaam's countrymen or his neighbours. But this inference admits a *melius inquirendum*, "a further inquisition;" for by the star foreprophesied by Balaam this star which the wise men saw cannot be meant, according to the literal or assertive sense; for that pitcheth only upon the King of the Jews, or the Messias; he was the *Star of Jacob*, which Balaam meant. Yet, inasmuch as this *Star of Jacob*, that is, the promised Messias, was ordained of old to be as well *a light unto the Gentiles* as to be *the glory of the people Israel*, it was most agreeable to the sweet disposition of Divine providence that he should be first manifested to the Gentiles by the light of a star: so that this star which the wise men saw in the east was foreprophesied of, or intimated by Balaam, though not according to the literal or assertive sense, yet in the allusive, characterical, or relative sense: of which kind of foreshadowing evangelical mysteries somewhat hath
435 been premised: and there is no question but Balaam's

prophecy had been scattered, not only through his own country, but through many other eastern provinces: and yet the time of this star's appearing, seeing it was to appear, and to be as it were an emblem or index of the Star of Jacob's birth, was more punctually set down by Daniel, whose prophecy, or broken traditions of it, were in all probability further scattered or spread throughout the east, especially amongst the Medes and Persians. Their opinion is more probable who think these wise men came out of Persia, or the confines of it, rather than out of Balaam's country, which was Mesopotamia or Chaldea.

SECT. III.

CERTAINTY or probable conjecture there is none, that this star should first appear in the latitude or meridian of Judæa, of Chaldea, or Mesopotamia, or that it should guide these wise men unto Jerusalem, as some have imagined, but without all ground. Most certain it is—for the text affirms it—that this star did lead them from Jerusalem to Beth-lehem; for it is said, ver. 9, *When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over the place wherein the young child was.* But that it should in like manner guide or lead them from their own country to Jerusalem, no circumstance of the text doth guide or warrant us to conjecture; the contradictory rather is imported, ver. 10, *When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.* This *exceeding great joy* upon the regained sight of this star argues they had a long time been deprived from the sight of it, and as is most probable, from the very time that they set forward for Jerusalem, from what coast or country soever they came. What kind of course or

motion this star observed whilst they saw it in the east, the scripture intimates not; but the course or motion which it held from Jerusalem to Beth-lehem was unusual, not circular, from east to west: and the same star which could by God's providence guide them to the very place where the new born babe (who was by birth King of the Jews) did reside, might by the same providence easily teach them the time of his birth whilst they were in their own country, which was far eastward from Jerusalem. When they say, *We saw his star in the east*[a], this speech in the original admits an amphibology, or doubtful sense. First it may imply, that they being in the east (whether in Persia or in some further country) did see this star, not in their own meridian or latitude, but towards the meridian of Judæa or Mesopotamia. But this sense or construction, for the reason before alleged, is improbable; for so they might have seen it better in their journey towards Jerusalem than they had done in their own country. Or this speech, *We have seen his star in the east*, may import that they being in their own country, which was eastward from Jerusalem, did see this star ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, *in the east* from them, or in the eastern point of the horizon from Persia, or of India beyond Ganges. This sense is most agreeable to the original phrase, ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ, that is, *in the east* κατ' ἐξοχὴν, in the very furthest part of the east then known, or so far eastward as any part of Asia the Great doth extend; so as the east might take notice of
436 his birth whose sovereign dominion was to extend from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, from every point of heaven or earth to all points imaginable in them. Again, when it is said that those wise men *saw his star in the east*, and that they came

[a] Εἴδομεν αὐτοῦ τὸν ἀστέρα ἐν τῇ ἀνατολῇ.

from the east, the phrase or character of speech in the original is much different, though in our English the same: for they are said to come, not ἀπ' ἀνατολῆς, but ἀπ' ἀνατολῶν, in the plural, as we would say, from the *easts* or *eastern regions*, which had not all either the same latitude or meridian, from places perhaps further distant than Italy or Greece, Germany or Hungaria; and yet the apparition of the star was east in respect of all their several habitations.

SECT. IV.

THE next query is about the circumstance of the time, either when they first saw the star, or when they came to Jerusalem. A late chronologer of deserved esteem[b] would persuade us that this new star made its first appearance at the time of our Saviour's conception; and his reason is, because comets or new stars do rather portend events to come, than point at occurrences present or past. But the apparition of comets or strange stars at the birth of great princes is not unusual, at least not without example or observation; for a strange comet did appear at the birth of Mithridates, that active and stirring prince, which did truly portend, though not his birth, yet his disposition, when he came to years—one that should set the eastern nations in combustion about the confines of the Roman empire, as the star that appeared at his birth did seem to threaten to set the heavens or element of air on fire. But for this star which these wise men saw, it is agreed upon by all, even by the most curious inquisitors, that it first appeared either at the time of our Saviour's birth, or at the time of his conception; and yet whether of these opinions we pitch upon, both admit some doubt. First, if these wise men had seen

[b] Reusnerus.

this star at the time of our Saviour's conception, how chanceth it that they came so late, so many days after his birth, seeing they had time enough to make preparation for their journey, and to bid this King of the Jews welcome into the world, to have been the very first which should have tendered their service and allegiance to him? Again, if this star did first appear unto them at the time of our Saviour's birth, and did enlighten them in this point of faith at the same instant that the light did shine unto the shepherds about Beth-lehem; how was it possible they should come so soon unto Jerusalem as they did, especially if they came as far as Persia, or further? Both objections, this latter especially, were unanswerable, if we grant that they came to worship our Saviour as upon this very day, which is the twelfth day from his nativity *exclusivè*.

437 SECT. V.

THERE is an ancient tradition in the Romish church, yet but a tradition, which graceth the sixth of January with three great wonders: first, with the coming of these wise men to Beth-lehem; secondly, with our Saviour's baptism, as on this day, in Jordan; thirdly, with the first miracle which our Saviour wrought, that was, *turning water into wine*, at Cana in Galilee. This last is but conjectural: the second, that our Saviour should be baptized as upon this day, is most improbable; so improbable, that Jansenius, a learned bishop of that church, hath clearly refuted it: the first tradition, that these wise men should come as upon this very day to Beth-lehem, is altogether incredible; so incredible, that no child or novice in faith, which will use the evangelical story, as these wise men did this star, for his guide or leader, but may easily

discern a great incogitancy in the first authors of this tradition, and a strange negligence in such as follow their opinion, having liberty and opportunity to examine their doctrine, as the Bereans did St. Paul's, by the scripture. First, it is evident from St. Matthew, chap. ii, that God immediately upon these wise men's coming to Beth-lehem did forewarn them not to return to Herod at Jerusalem as they had promised; and at the same time did warn Joseph in a dream to fly into Egypt, because Herod would seek the life of the child. It is evident again, out of St. Luke, chap. ii, that our Saviour, the new born King of the Jews, whom the wise men came to worship, was presented to his Father in the temple, according to the rite or custom of the law, before he was carried by Joseph into Egypt. Now it is incredible, unimaginable, that Joseph, after he was warned by God to fly with what speed he could into Egypt, would suffer the blessed virgin, his espoused wife, (after God had foretold him that Herod would go about to seek the life of the child,) to go with our Saviour unto Jerusalem. So that the case is clear they went into Egypt after the purification of the blessed virgin, which was five weeks and more after the birth of our Saviour, and before these wise men came to Beth-lehem, but how long before their coming is uncertain. But that clause of old Simeon's blessing, *Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people, to be a light unto the Gentiles*, was a prophecy of that acknowledgment which these wise men, in the name of the Gentiles, made of their allegiance to him. When Simeon uttered this song, or prophecy, these wise men were not come to Beth-lehem nor to Jerusalem. And yet it is to be presumed, that upon the first apparition of his star in the east, or of their notice of it, (if it did

appear before they took notice of it,) they made what haste they could unto Jerusalem. And this persuades us that, being at the least five weeks in coming thither, they came from regions far eastward from Jerusalem, as far as the eastern parts of Persia, or from some part of India beyond Ganges.

438 SECT. VI.

BUT here I know not what secret instinct doth prohibit me to leave this point, or rather lead me to a further inquiry, from what people or region these wise men came, before I can rightly determine or conjecture about what time they came to Jerusalem. It is, if not altogether certain, yet most probable, that they came from some people or nation which had better traditions of a King of the Jews that should be greater than any that had gone before him—a people more peaceable, and loving commerce, or dealing, with Judah and Israel in their flourishing days—than Balaam's country, or other neighbour provinces had. Of such people we can imagine but two sorts; the one, the inhabitants of that country whence the queen of the south came to hear Solomon's wisdom, which, as best writers now agree, was from Meroe, a region some five hundred miles within the tropic of Cancer, where the variation of day and night is but half-an-hour, it being the first northern clime, at the least a thousand miles from Jerusalem southward. But how the inhabitants or governors of this country should first see the star in the east, unless they had traffick or commerce with those eastern provinces wherein it did first appear, is not conceivable. The other sort of people, which can with probability be imagined to have seen this star first, are the inhabitants of those provinces,

islands, or countries, with which Solomon and Hiram had happy traffick for gold, ivory, and other precious commodities.

SECT. VII.

It will be no paradox to imagine that the people of these provinces had some tradition or prenotion, that there was to arise a greater king than Solomon in the land of Judæa, with whom they desired to renew their ancient league or commerce. And this is most agreeable unto the prophecies concerning their coming unto Christ, and the historical types of Solomon's time: *And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day:* 1 Kings x. 11, 12. *Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country,* vv. 14, 15: Again, vv. 22—25, *The king had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.* The question then revolves 439
upon this point, where Ophir and Tharshish (which

furnished Solomon with gold) were situated? Of Ophir we read distinctly, 1 Kings ix. 26—28: *And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.* Tharshish was not far from it, perhaps further east than Ophir. From these regions, no question, the wise men came, and it may be did land at Sheba, or Seba, which is that part of Arabia Felix which is next to Ethiopia, and (if Lucan were not out in his astronomy) lay beyond the tropic of Cancer[a]. And all this we may say was done, that it might be fulfilled which was foretold by the royal prophet, Psalm lxxii. 10, 11, 15: *The kings of Tharshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised.* All this was verified of Solomon as in the shadow, but fulfilled only in Christ, the Son of David, as in the body or substance, as is apparent from those glorious titles wherewith the royal prophet concludes this Psalm: *His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things,* &c. vv. 17, 18. If the ingenuous reader require more punctual satisfac-

[a] Ignotum vobis Arabes venistis in orbem: umbras mirati nemorum non ira sinistras.

tion where Tharshish was situated, or whether it were that island which we now call Sumatra, the best author I can refer him unto is that learned Portugal Varerius, whose treatise heretofore was hard to come by, it being bound up only with some parcels of Caninius and Nebrissensis, but set forth of late by Pontanus, in his attempted answer to Mr. Selden, *De Mari clauso;* for what reason or purpose I know not, unless this author, with the epigrammatist, had bought more paper than he knew how to fill with good and pertinent matter, without the help of this treatise.

SECT. VIII.

AT what time soever these wise men came to Bethlehem, from what country soever they came, this we are bound absolutely to believe, that thither they came to adore our Saviour in the days of Herod the king. But even against this truth, which every Christian is strictly bound absolutely to believe, the atheist or other infidel, the Jew especially, will thus object: 'If your evangelist's history of these wise men's coming to Jerusalem, and of the murder of the infants about Bethlehem, which their coming thither did occasion, be true, how comes it to pass, that Josephus, a diligent historian by your own confession, (to whose authority you attribute much in matters of fact publicly known, and of greater consequence,) should omit both these stories, being a man withal no way partial towards Herod, whom though he often commend for his princely virtues, yet he sometimes as sharply taxeth for his cruelty and unprincely jealousy, specially in his old age; and yet the greatest cruelty which he committed, 440
the most outcrying sin whereof he was guilty, was the butchery of these infants, which were by birth Josephus's countrymen, as then no Christians, but Jews?'

Unto this or the like objection against our belief, whether made by the Jew or other, we are bound by the apostle's rule to give an answer, in that we are bound to give a *reason of our faith and hope to every one that shall demand it.* To the objection proposed, thus we answer in the first place: that many are of the court which are not of the council, and yet even of kings' sworn and privy councillors many know only the pretended causes of war, or of such bloody designs as Herod practised against these infants, but not the true and proper motives; these are mysteries of state, which that noble late historian tells us are known only to such as himself and Philip de Comines by their places were; men that lodge at the feet of kings, of their bedchamber or cabinet council; such a man Josephus was not in Herod's days, nor was he then born when these wise men came to adore him that was born King of the Jews: that which he relates concerning the passages of these times he had heard perhaps from some of the court, but from none of Herod's cabinet council; the Holy Ghost doth tell us that Herod called the wise men *privily* or *secretly*, to be informed by them concerning the time of the Messiah's birth; yet them he acquainted not with his purpose to take away his life, which was the only occasion which he had to take away the life of so many infants.

SECT. IX.

UNTO the truth related by the evangelist, Josephus himself, though unwittingly, gives testimony or information not impertinent; for he tells us that Herod, not long before his death, was possessed with such a deep and discontented melancholy, as is no way credible it could take its original from the cause which he assigns for it. Herod, as he relates, caused all the nobles of

Judæa to be imprisoned, or shut up under a guard of soldiers in the tilt yard or game court, giving strict charge unto his executors, that immediately upon his departure out of this world they should all be put to death, and that there should be one slain in every family: and this he did (as Josephus tells us) out of a jealous fear that there should be no such mourning at his death as there had been at the death of other kings, unless he gave the Jews this cause of bitter mourning for themselves. But the evangelist gives us a better reason of this his desperate discontent, which doubtless arose from the wise men's question, *Ubi est ille qui natus est Rex Judæorum? Where is the King of the Jews which is now born*, or, as the original will bear it, *King of the Jews by birth?* This could not but strike Herod to the very heart, who was king of the Jews, not by birth, but by possession or mere usurpation; and when he perceived that the wise men had deluded him in not returning again to Jerusalem as they promised, ἐθυμώθη λίαν, *he was exceeding wroth*, his anger did boil within his breast, and out of this fretting jealousy he murdered and made away all the infants about Beth-lehem, under two years old: but this he might do before his death with less noise or public notice than would be made or taken if his de- 441
sign to murder all the nobility of Judæa had taken effect. But those whom he put in trust with the execution of this design did relent after his death; and it is probable that their deliverance from bloody persecution did swallow up the cry of the murdered infants from the ears of all, save from the ears of God, and their parents which could not help them, which durst not take just notice of it. However, the same occasion which moved Herod to kill these infants did likewise incense him to take away the nobles of Judah, lest

they haply might take part with this new born King of the Jews against his son, on whom he sought to settle the sovereignty of Judæa and Galilee by the authority of Augustus then Roman emperor, unto whom he submitted the ratification or nullification of his last will and testament.

SECT. X.

BUT can we produce the positive testimony of any historian of those times as unpartial for us Christians as Josephus was, or any passage in any heathen writer, that bears witness to the historical truth of our evangelist concerning the murder of these infants, which was occasioned by these wise men's coming unto Jerusalem? Yes! This positive truth, though secretly carried in Judæa, was famously known in Rome: it was related to Augustus, then emperor, whether by Quintilius Varus, then regent of Syria, or by some other. However, Augustus sealed the truth of it with that witty apophthegm, which Macrobius, an heathen classic writer of those times, hath recorded amongst other witty speeches of Augustus. The sum of his record is to this effect, that when news was brought to Augustus how Herod had put to death his own son with the infants which he caused to be slain in Syria, the emperor replied, *Melius est Herodis esse porcum, quam filium;* "It was better to be Herod's hog than his son." For Herod, being for his religion a Jew, would not have killed his hog, whereas with these infants he had killed his own son.

SECT. XI.

BUT here the zeal of some Christians to maintain the truth of the evangelical story hath cast an aspersion upon it, or raised a suspicion against it, from this

forecited passage of this forecited author. They imagine that Herod at that time had a son under two years old, which he caused to be murdered amongst other infants about Beth-lehem. But for this imagination they have no good author; and unless they had been negligent in perusing the words of this unpartial heathen author, and Josephus, they could have had no temptation, no occasion thus to imagine. For Macrobius doth not say that Herod's son, which was put to death at the same time and upon the same occasion that the infants about Beth-lehem were put to death, was then an infant. Thus to collect is to commit the fallacy *a bene divisis ad male conjuncta*, a fallacy which in other subjects every novice in the arts would 442
easily avoid. Though every poet be a man, yet will it not follow that every good man is a good poet, or that every good poet is a good or virtuous man: much less will it follow, that because Herod put his own son to death amongst the infants in Judæa, therefore his son was an infant. Nor doth the character of Augustus' censure upon this fact incline this way, but quite to the contrary. For in congruity of the Latin tongue, of whose elegancy he was most observant, he should have said, *Melius est Herodis porcellum esse, quam puerum*, "that it was better to be Herod's pig than his child," not his *hog*, if his son which he put to death had been an infant. Now it was evident out of Josephus, that Herod, not long before he died himself, did cause his son Antipater to be publicly condemned, and afterwards to be put to death, upon the same occasion, and out of the same jealousy, which, as the evangelist tells us, moved him to murder the infants about Beth-lehem. The joint motive to both these unnatural facts was an unhallowed hope to secure the sovereignty of Judæa and Galilee, the one unto Archelaus, the other

unto Antipas, both born after he was king; whereas Antipater, his eldest son, was born before he had this title bestowed upon him by the Romans. So that he which hath a mind and just occasion to inquire after the distinct time and season when these wise men came to Beth-lehem must begin his search from the time of Antipater's death; and that, I take it, was more than a year after the birth of our Saviour, some few days before Herod died. Seeing Solomon's and Hiram's fleet did make return from Tharshish but once in three year, it could not be expected that these wise men should come from thence within less than the space of one year.

SECT. XII.

THE end of these wise men's coming to Jerusalem, and of their journey from Jerusalem to Beth-lehem, was to worship this new-born King of the Jews. And worship him they did after the best manner of worship which they knew; for *they fell down, and opening their treasures, presented him with* the best things of the land and region from whence they came, *with gold, with myrrh, and frankincense.* And what opinion so-ever they had of him, whether as well a distinct apprehension of his Godhead, as of his future exaltation according to his manhood, they evidently declare, that that precept of the psalmist was written in their hearts, Psalm ii. 10—12: *Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.*

All of us will be ready to say, at least to think, that if we had seen his star, and known it to have been his star, we would have done as these wise men did: *Sed mentitur iniquitas sibi:* it is our hypocrisy which

deceives many of us. For if we believe the gospel, we must believe him to be a greater King than these wise men at his birth could conceive him to be; that *he is that Light which enlighteneth every man which cometh into the world.* Why then are we not as ready as these men were to worship him in truth and in spirit, especially seeing he calls us not so far from our own home to perform this duty? We have (God's name be 443
praised for it) places appointed for his worship amongst us at our own doors: for to this purpose were these churches or temples set apart or hallowed; and to these temples we often come, though not so oft as we should. But do we come to worship him with fear and reverence, or to offer sacrifice to him in them? Where then is that gesture or sign of submission which is proper to such as truly worship him? Many of us scarce vouchsafe to offer the sacrifice of prayers and thanksgiving, or to say Amen to such as offer it: or if this we do, we do it in such a negligent fashion as is not fitting for us to offer, or him to accept of our sacrifice. Many of us come to these places of worship and sacrifice only to hear the word preached; yet whilst the word is only preached, he that preaches only offers the sacrifice; and that he offers amiss, if he offer of that which cost him little or nothing. However, he only offers it, the rest are mere patients. True it is, that when we come unto the house of God, *it is better to hear, than to offer the sacrifice of fools.* And true it is again, that *obedience is better than sacrifice:* but there is a sacrifice of wise men, not of fools, and our best obedience is to offer this sacrifice when we come into the house of God. Wherein then doth this sacrifice consist? In devotion at prayers, in thanksgiving, and in almsdeeds: *with these sacrifices God is well pleased.* And if the end of hearing the word

preached be not to learn to offer this sacrifice aright, the more plentifully it is preached, the greater our attention in hearing it is, the worse it is, or the worse it will be with us in the issue, that do but prepare our hearts to hypocrisy. But of this sacrifice of prayers and almsdeeds I shall take occasion (if God permit) to speak more at large hereafter. The Lord in the mean time prepare your hearts to hear aright, and mine to instruct you aright.

A SERMON

ON

MATTHEW II. 17, 18.

Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by the prophet Jeremy, saying: In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.

SECT. I.

COULD the search of prophetical mysteries be at any time unseasonable amongst the sons of prophets, I am not ignorant how well either some other text might befit this present occasion, or this text some other season. Of such observations as by God's assistance and your wonted patience I hope now to impart unto you, most were conceived in a time very seasonable; and the longer their birth were deferred, the more likely they were to perish; though nothing of this kind, which without wrong to your patience may be preserved, can perish at any time otherwise than unseasonable. In this respect, though with some loss of late meditations in another argument often thought upon for this present occasion, I have thought good to commit what I conceived concerning this difficult prophecy partly to your memory, partly to paper, rather than suffer all utterly to die in my brain, being full charged with meditations of much different nature: thus to do I have been the rather persuaded, because I perceive the difficulty of this, and one or two places more, (but of this especially,) hath deterred

many excellent divines from the diligent search of many more prophecies, (whose accomplishment have been expressly related in the gospel,) as if there were no hope of finding any deeper mystery in them, than quotation of the prophet by way of allusion and accommodation. I will not here dispute the question, whether any prophecy may be truly said (or was meant by the evangelist) to be fulfilled only in this sense; of all other, I am persuaded this prophecy in my text includes a far greater mystery.

SECT. II.

SOME principal difficulties wherewith this text is charged I have discussed in other domestic meditations, more capable of grammatical disquisitions: one was, how this *lamentation*, which the prophet said *was heard in Rama*[a], should be taken up, as the evangelist tells us, in Beth-lehem? Our English Geneva, to salve
446 this difficulty which ariseth from the distance of these places, reads it thus; "A voice was heard on high;" with the warrant, I must confess, of St. Hierom, but not without appearance of some wrong unto St. Matthew or his interpreter, who retains the name of Rama in the Greek; and it were fitting it should be retained in the prophetical text, however they might expound it in the margin. But the difficulty would be little or none, if we admit Rama, to be put *per synecdochen*, for all, or most cities of Benjamin: albeit I would not reject the Geneva interpretation as altogether contrary or impertinent to the prophet's meaning; the original word may, according to the purpose of the Holy Ghost, truly include both senses; the one, as more literal and proper to the type, the other, as more remarkable and peculiar to the body or substance; but thus to have

[a] Jerem. xxxi. 15.

rendered Rama *on high* had been more tolerable in the evangelist than in the prophet.

SECT. III.

THE principal difficulty is, to what use this evangelical relation serves? For what harmony can this lamentable accident have with the glad tidings of the gospel lately proclaimed? how do these bitter outcries either grace Christ's birth or confirm our faith? For the more perspicuous and facile solution of these and many like doubts, I must crave leave to intersert certain prolepses or prenotions; and for the instruction of the younger, beg one or two postulary suppositions, which, unto such as are exercised in prophecies, will upon the proposal go for maxims. The first supposition shall be this.

SECT. IV.

THE evangelists, by the direction of the Spirit, give us only the hint of most prophecies which they tell us are fulfilled; the exact paralleling of the type and antitype, according to all or most circumstances, they purposely leave to the industrious search of posterity: for had they set forth exact comments upon prophetical passages truly fulfilled in the events related by them, both would have been more liable, if not to suspicion, yet to a possible imagination of forgery; and the whole truth or full knowledge of prophecies being clearly opened unto us by them, would have been less esteemed than now it is, whiles by their brief directions it is found out by our long and painful search. A fit instance for confirmation of this supposition I gave you in my last meditations out of this place: to the Jews, purposely demanding a sign, our Saviour says no more than this; *As Jonas was three days and*

three nights in the belly of the whale, so should the Son of man be three days and three nights in the womb of the earth; adding withal, that if thus much would not serve for their instruction, *the men of Nineveh should rise up in judgment against them.* This brief caveat might have taught them to have made that collection whose neglect brought forth destruction, on whose right use or application their safety depended. The use or application was this: As after Jonas' resurrection the Ninevites, so this people, after
447 his resurrection, should have forty days to make their peace with God [b]; otherwise that sentence which Jonas denounced against Nineveh should be executed upon Jerusalem and her children; as it was at forty years' end: and how easily they might have made this calculation of forty years by the forty days of Christ's abode on earth (after his resurrection) was then declared.

SECT. V.

In like manner the evangelist in this place acquaints us only with Rachel's tears and bitter outcries; but what these may portend, he leaves for us to search out. The method which I mean to observe in this search shall be, first, to unfold the literal meaning, or historical circumstance of the prophet; secondly, to compare them with like circumstances or signs of time related in the gospel. Thus it followeth in the prophet: *Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to thine own border* [c].

[b] Vide Numb. xiv. 34. [c] Jerem. xxxi. 16, 17.

SECT. VI.

YOU must consider that this promise being within seventy years sealed by the experiment of the event, did not expire with that generation to whom it was made or performed; but being compared with other more ancient predictions or portendments, whereunto the prophet hath special reference, it was an everlasting infallible prognostication to this people, that the overflow of Rachel's tears did foretoken greater good to the land and border of Benjamin, than the inundation of Nilus doth to Egypt.

SECT. VII.

My second Supposition must be this.

MANY places, as well in prophetical as evangelical writings, have peculiar reference to some passages of more ancient stories, with which duly compared, as streams with their fountains, their current is placid and fluent, their explication perspicuous and easy; but without such comparison, very turbulent and harsh. Thus, as in my last public meditations I acquainted you, those words of St. Paul, 1 Tim. ii. 15, concerning *the woman's salvation*, διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας, admit a facile and commodious exposition from that reference which they manifestly include unto the manner of the first woman's transgression, and the promise thereupon made unto the woman's seed; so may those words, Matt. xxiii. 35, *that upon you may come all the righteous blood* &c., (which have tortured most interpreters as much as they have tortured them,) suffer a plain 448
and gentle explication, useful for all ages, for all states and kingdoms; from serious consideration of that

special reference which our Saviour in St. Luke's relation of that passage expressly includes unto Zacharias's ominous speech when he died—*Lord look upon it and require it.* With these I may rank that other place, Rom. ix. 19, *Why doth he yet find fault?* &c. which some (otherwise most skilful pilots) misreferring to the whole discourse of predestination, have set their compass much amiss, whiles they adventured to launch out into the bottomless and boundless gulf of election and reprobation: but of this elsewhere.

SECT. VIII.

THE places whereto that part of the prophet (which our evangelist here acknowledgeth fulfilled) hath special reference, are the stories of Joseph's and Benjamin's birth: *God,* saith Moses, *remembered Rachel, and God hearkened unto her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and she called his name Joseph.* She took this welcome boon as an undoubted pledge of the like blessing to come, for she said, (by sacred instinct, no doubt, or inspiration,) *The Lord shall add to me another son,* Gen. xxx. 22, 24. Howbeit, as we read, Gen. xxxv. 17, when she was in peril of childbirth, she gave her former hopes of this second son for lost; and the midwife is fain to comfort her with her own prediction, or good ominous presagement of Joseph's name: *Fear not; thou shalt have this son also:* yet, as it followeth, *when her soul was in departing, she called his name Ben-oni,* "the son of my sorrow." *But his father,* (seeking with speed to avert this sinister omen,) forthwith *called him Benjamin,* the son of his right hand.

That which the heathens have observed, either concerning the imposition of names—

> Conveniunt rebus nomina sæpe suis—

or the presages of parents—

> Heu nunquam vana parentum,
> Auguria[d] &c.
> I, cautus, nec vana Thetyn timuisse memento[e]—

is of most observable use in the ancient patriarchs. The names given by them unto their children did often foresignify their state or condition; as he that will truly observe what is written in the sacred stories concerning Benjamin shall find that (*utriusque nominis omen habet*) he bare neither of the former names for nought: we may see two different fates of his posterity (fully answerable to the contrary importance of the names given him by his father and mother) often wrestling, yet so as the victory is more permanent with the weirds allotted him in that name which his father bestowed upon him. No tribe in Israel was more valorous, yet none so subject to sorrowful disasters as the tribe of Benjamin; as for instance, suppose Rachel (as this prophetical prosopopœia supposed her living a great while after, but suppose she) had lived so long, and no longer, as to see that most lamentable massacre and almost final extirpation of this tribe mentioned, Judges xx. 35, &c. might she not justly have taken up her complaint in the poet, whom 449
of a long joyful mother of the stoutest heroics in that age the enemy's sword had in one day made childless:

> Ha quanto melius, dextraque in sorte jugatæ,
> Queis steriles thalami, nulloque ululata dolore
> Respexit Lucina domum, mihi quippe malorum
> Causa labor[f].———

'What folly moved me to envy the fertility of my sister

[d] Statius, Achilleid. i. 35. [e] Ibid. iv. 267. [f] Thebaid. iii. 257.

Leah, whenas barrenness had been to me a blessing? With more comfort might I have strangled Ben-oni in the birth, or buried him the day wherein he was born, than now to see five and twenty thousand of his children, all men of years, of strength, and courage, slain by desperate hands of their furious brethren, the unnatural sons of Israel, and the poor remnant enforced (as old Isaac would not suffer their father Jacob) to take their wives from a foreign tribe[g]!' Benjamin at this time was indeed Ben-oni, a true son of sorrow unto his mother; but the next memorable news which we hear of him in the sacred story is, that he is become the head of his brethren; for within this very age the first king of Israel is chosen out of this late desolate tribe: and though he in the end prove Ben-oni, yet this tribe of Benjamin sticks close to Judah, when all the rest revolted to his brother Joseph; and so long as Judah continued God's lawgiver, Benjamin continued his right hand, or valorous executioner.

SECT. IX.

BUT now at this time when my prophet wrote, the men of Judah and Benjamin were straitly besieged in Jerusalem, and the land of Benjamin, lying in the Chaldæans' way unto the city, was miserably wasted, the women and children, without guard or defence, exposed to the merciless rage of cruel enemies. This is the reason why old Rachel renews her former complaint, and will not be persuaded but that Benjamin must still be Ben-oni: she and her daughters (for under the name of Rachel must we comprehend all the woeful mothers of that tribe) fill the heavens with their outcries, whiles their children are either pitifully slain before their eyes, or drawn out of their embrace-

g Judges xxi. 12.

ments into miserable bondage: though mention be only made of Rama, yet must we imagine the wailings to have been as loud and bitter about Beth-lehem, which was in the border of Benjamin, and near unto the place where Rachel died.

SECT. X.

THE comfort which the prophet (well acquainted with all the references) ministereth to his mother Rachel (for he himself was a Benjamite) is thus: Rachel, thou sorrowedst when thou broughtest forth my father Benjamin, as fearing lest he should have died with thee or before thee; yet after hard labour and pains, thou hadst this joy, that a man-child was brought forth into the world; and albeit through womanish 450
fear thou gavest him a name importing sorrow, yet his father wisely changed it into a name aboding much better hopes. Howbeit even Jacob himself (for he had a woman to his mother) mourned a long time for Joseph, weening he had been devoured with wild beasts; and when Benjamin was called by God to go into Egypt for the good of his brethren, he complained, and said, *I shall be robbed of my child, as I have been* [h].

Notwithstanding this ill aboding, Benjamin returned in safety with his brother Judah, and young Joseph and old Jacob (who had a long time lamented his loss) had a joyful meeting. Such at this time is thy fear and sorrow; but much better hereafter than any old Jacob found shall thy comfort be; Joseph, thou weenest, is utterly perished from among the sons of men, but he continues a mighty people among the Medes and Assyrians; and though Benjamin be now led captive unto Babylon, yet Judah is gone with him

[h] Gen. xliii. 14.

as his pledge; and if he bring him not back again, let the blame be his, yea mine, yea God's for ever: *For thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them,* Jerem. xxxiii. 25, 26: *Yea, I have sworn by my holiness, that I will not fail David,* Psalm lxxxix. 35. Now so long as this promise lasts, either in general to Israel or Abraham's seed, Benjamin must have his child's portion in this blessing; or whiles this blessing remains in peculiar sort to the seed of David, Benjamin for his faithful adherence unto Judah (so long as either city or temple was standing) must participate with him in the prerogative; and when the kingdom shall be restored again, whosoever sitteth on the left hand, faithful Benjamin must sit on the right hand of the throne of David.

So within seventy years it came to pass that the posterity of Benjamin returned with Judah into the land of promise, and inhabited Jerusalem, Beth-lehem, and other bordering cities, promiscuously with the royal tribe; whereas the residue of Jacob's seed, which had been captivated, returned but scatteringly now and then, and took their habitation where they could get it, either in Canaan or near about it.

SECT. XI.

THE purport of my second supposition (that this comfort ministered by Jeremiah to his mother Rachel and her daughters, was not to be restrained to that present occasion, whereof it was truly meant) may be

ratified from the places last cited being compared with those promises, Jerem. xxxi. 28: *And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so I will watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.* This he promised should be an everlasting covenant, vv. 31, 32; by the very tenor of it this people was given to understand that the exhibition of plagues foretold by 451
God's prophets was always a sure pledge of the mercies and blessings which in his name they had promised.

SECT. XII.

My third Supposition must be this.

THE captivity or civil death of Judah and Benjamin under Nebuchadnezzar, their redemption thence, and restauration to their own land, were express types or prefigurations, the one of their bodily and spiritual death, the other of their resurrection from the grave and restitution unto paradise: and in this type it is included, that Rachel's present mourning for the bodily death of her sons must have a new comfort, answerable to her former comfort for their civil death and captivity.

Thus may we gather the issue or product of this prophecy by the golden rule: Look what proportion Rachel's comfort at her children's return from Babylon had held with her sorrow for their captivity; her comfort in the gospel must bear the same proportion to the just occasions of her sorrow related by St. Matthew. Let us see, then, how the prophet's description of the sorrow which befell her in his time doth fit her sorrow procured by Herod.

Were I to unfold this prophecy amongst women, a

little rhetoric would persuade them that no event since the world began could minister so just matter of those womanish throbs and bitter howlings, which no translation can so well express as the very sound of the original text rightly pronounced would do even to such as understand it not. Mothers' bowels of compassion sympathise deeplier with the sorrows of their children, than masculine parents can do; deepliest with the sorrows of such children as have been lateliest extracted from them: and unto the weaker sex the sight or memory of bloody death is always terrible, but more ghastly by how much the parties suffering are more young and tender; it is then most disconsolate and unsupportable, when it befalleth infants, not by accident of war in some furious assault, but so wilfully and wittingly plotted, as the parents can be no sharers with them in the danger.

> *A voice was heard in Rama, lamentation, and weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.*

When we say *men, fathers, and brethren*, our purpose is not to exclude women, as no true parts of our auditory. The historical circumstances of this passage import, that Rachel had just cause to weep as well for her daughters as for her sons, and in this consideration perhaps our English bringeth her in weeping for her *children:* howbeit the very grammatical propriety of the original word doth so exactly fit the evangelical event, as the spirit of prophecy may seem principally to have shot at it through the historical occasion; it is *verbatim, Rachel weeping for her sons:* and at this time she weeps for these alone; Herod had no quarrel to the females.

For her sons she wept, and would not be comforted, 452
because they were not.

The less they were, or the more they were not, the less reason she had, or the more unwilling was she to be comforted. In the former calamity they were not, as we say, *secundum quid*, that is, not in the borders of Benjamin, not in the land of their nativity, but in bondage to a foreign enemy, whence, in the sight of man, it was very improbable, yet not altogether impossible for them to return; but now *simpliciter* they *are not*, nowhere to be found in any land of the living; death had seized upon them for the land of darkness, wherein all things are forgotten; and who is he can bring them thence? Not the high priest, Jesus the son of Josedec; not Zorobabel, which conducted their fathers from captivity; not Samson, though in the prime of his full strength he did carry away the gates of Azzah, but was not able to withstand the gates of death; not David, nor their father Benjamin, though both were alive to command or lead the whole posterity of Israel. All these might say of the sons of Rachel as David did of his child by Bath-sheba, *We may well go to them, but they cannot come to us*[i]; it is not in our power to bring them back. Where then is the wonted promise of Rachel's reward? who shall comfort her in this calamity?

SECT. XIII.

SURELY this tragical event (all circumstances of time and place and occasions of Rachel's sorrow being duly compared with their types) gives evident testimony that the true David, the true Benjamin, was now brought forth; for all this misery fell on

[i] 2 Sam. xii. 23.

these infants of Judah and Benjamin, upon a constant report or known fame of a King of the Jews lately born in Beth-lehem, a city of David. Now as David did prefigure him in the place, (for David was born in Beth-lehem,) so did Benjamin prefigure him (to speak after the manner of men) in the casual manner of his birth. It is a point to be observed, that of all the sons of Jacob only Benjamin was born in the land of promise, and Rachel's pillar, there erected, stood as a *statua mercurialis*, to point out the manner how and the place where the pomised Messias, the *flower of Jesse* and the hope of Benjamin, should first come as a stranger or pilgrim into his own inheritance. For Rachel (as the forementioned story telleth us) was journeying towards Beth-lehem when she died in travail of Benjamin, who was born within a furlong of the city; the blessed virgin outruns her, and gets the goal; yet, as if Rachel her harbinger had come short, the inn is taken up before her coming, and she must bring forth the promised Messias in an outhouse, as Rachel did Benjamin in the open field.

453 SECT. XIII.

Now to calculate the sum of Rachel's and her daughters' hope of comfort in the gospel, according to the just improvement of their sorrow procured by Herod, my text, compared with former types and references, speaks thus:

Herod hath taken order ye shall not weep without cause; be it your care not to weep without measure. Mourn not as those who have no hope, but even in the midst of your bitterest complaints still remember Rachel's hard labour must have a joyful reward; that her exceeding sorrows portend extraordinary comfort in the issue. The best name she had to bestow upon

your father when she brought him forth was Ben-oni, *son of my sorrow.* As his birth brought forth her death, so she looked he should not be longlived himself, of little comfort to his loving friends. But this name did in a manner die with her that gave it, and never revived but as a pledge of comfort, or earnest of a joyful change. The name given in lieu hereof by his father, by which he himself whilst he lived, by which his mighty progeny since, and the land of their habitation, hath for many generations been best known, was Benjamin, *son of the right hand,* a son of strength and succour to his friends, a son of terror to his enemies. The destiny allotted him by his father at his birth was ratified after by his solemn blessing upon his deathbed: *Benjamin shall flourish like a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* Gen. xlix. 27.

And now behold a child is born upon your borders, near to the place of your father Benjamin's birth, who, as you misdeem, shall revive your mother Rachel's complaints, and ratify the hard weirds which she bestowed upon the son of her sorrow; one that at his birth hath made the sons of Benjamin and Judah right Ben-onies, true sons of sorrow to you their mothers. And though his mother did not part with him as Rachel did with your father, yet herein her hap may seem the harder, that she must live to lament his death; for Simeon already hath read her doom: *Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius: A sword shall pierce through thy own side.* Luke ii. 35. And is not this to be to her Ben-oni? And as is the name, such is the nature which he takes from her. He is the woman's seed, and therefore a man of sorrows; a man subject to such misery as would revive your mother's tears dried up with death. But *He,* whose only

begotten Son he is, (the same who said, *I am a father to Jacob, and Israel is my posterity*,) hath a name to bestow upon him above all names, and will exalt him from the state of misery and mortality, wherein he lives, to the right hand of Eternal Majesty, to that inheritance whereof the whole land of Benjamin is but a sorry map, to be a high priest of that sanctuary whereof all Jerusalem and Judah are but the model; of whose person Melchizedek was but a fleeting shadow. And what shall be your hope *in novissimis?* If your father Benjamin, the son of Jacob's right hand, could by God's providence give you being when you were not, shall not this Benjamin, the Son of God's right hand, provide a better being than here they could hope for in his everlasting kingdom? Measure the amplitude of their inheritance by that plot or
454 draught which the finger of God hath drawn in your fathers' redemption from Chaldæan thraldom, and restitution to the land of promise. So full experience had they then of that joyful issue which Jeremiah promised to your mother Rachel's mourning, that they left this as a tried receipt or approved cordial to posterity, whensoever, the like malady should befall them—*They that sow in tears shall reap in joy: He that goeth forth weeping*, (like some barbarian, altogether ignorant in the art of husbandry, whose fear is, lest that corn which should have fed him should utterly perish in the ground,) *shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him*[k]. The heavens echoing with your late outcrying, and the air and earth moistened with your weeping, are a world of witness to men and angels that you have more plentifully sowed in tears than did your ancestors: what then is your hope, or where is your comfort? As the

[k] Psalm cxxvi. 5, 6.

sorrows of your seedtime have abounded, so the joys of your harvest shall superabound. The Lord's promise unto your ancestors is not yet expired, but extends in full force to you and yours. With what more precious seed could the land of Judah and Benjamin be sown than with the blood of tender infants, never tainted with harmful or bloody thought? What though thus scattered upon the ground by cruel hands, which have skill enough to destroy and waste, but none to reap; it shall be gathered by the right hand of Him which found out the birth of man, and dispensed the breath of life to all things living! Not a grain of this seed shall perish, or prove unfruitful: this present sorrow shall bring forth joy; in some thirty, in some forty, in some a hundred fold. Every corn shall have his ear, and every ear his full load of incorruptible and pleasant fruit. The Lord's wonted voice of joy and comfort is not shortened to you daughters of Rachel. Unto the daughters of Rachel thus saith the Lord; *Refrain your voices from weeping, and your eyes from tears:* wish not in your hearts that these your children might return to you, but rather that you may go to them; so shall your last end be full of hope; for they are returned unto their borders, unto that blissful Paradise wherein man in his first and best days had his abode, and are made now partakers of His presence from whose mouth the first father of these our bodies received the sweet influence of celestial life. This is the land of your true rest, where Jesus, the Son of God's right hand, lately born upon your borders, will transplant this sacred vine which Herod, upon the fame of his nativity, had made to bleed more plentifully in the land promised to your forefathers than Pharaoh did in Egypt about the time of Moses' birth.

And is it not time it were transplanted, whenas the vineyard lieth open to all the beasts of the forest?

Moses, your lawgiver, after he had escaped the cruel massacre generally intended against all the males of Israel, brought your fathers out of the land of Egypt and oppression: but Joshua, his successor, (because the law hath made nothing perfect,) conducted them into a land of liberty, of ease, and rest; but wherein the holiest of your priests and prophets, the mightiest among your kings and rulers, had been still subject unto death, and taken their last repose with the beggar in the dust. But this Jesus, to whom cruel Egypt now affordeth safe shelter from Herodian butchery, being your anointed *King*, *Priest*, and *Prophet*, is the Mediator of a better covenant, able to redeem his followers from the vale of darkness and shadow of death; yea, to conduct them from the
455 prison of the grave unto a kingdom *where the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold* to that it is. Isaiah xxx. 26. He hath the *keys* of life, of death, and hell in his hands; *where he openeth none may shut; where he shutteth none may open.* Isaiah xxii. 22.

SECT. XIV.

If you desire a just or authentic warrant for this paraphrase, you may take it from the sixteenth of this prophecy, verse the fourteenth: *Behold, the day cometh, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth, that brought the children of Israel out of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: I*

will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers.

He that denieth this passage to be literally meant of Judah and Benjamin's deliverance from Babylon, because they are only fulfilled in our deliverance by Christ, shall give the Jew great advantage, and commit as great an oversight, as if an heir possessed of a goodly lordship should burn the *terrar* of it, which his ancestors had truly taken for their successors' good, (if they had wit to use it,) when any controversy should happen concerning the bounds or extent of their inheritance. The Jew, on the contrary, in denying these places to be meant of Christ and us, because they have been literally verified in the deliverances of their fathers by Zorobabel, and Jesuah the priest, is like a man distracted, which brags and boasts he hath a goodly heritage, because he can shew the map or engrossed *terrar* of those lands which the law had taken from him for want of wit to use them aright.

If you compare these Israelites' two deliverances from Egypt and Babylon upon equal terms, the former was more miraculous: how then doth God promise that the glory of the latter should eclipse the splendour of the former? The most commodious answer to this difficulty, in my opinion, must be this: The prophet measures the first deliverance from Egypt only by its own real greatness, but expresseth this future deliverance from Babylon and the north land, according to its representative greatness, i. e. as it is a more immediate map of a more mighty deliverance to ensue. Now we know that a map, though in itself a thousand times less than the least parcel of enclosed ground, may represent the exact form or proportion of that country whose name it bears, though that be ten thousand times bigger than the largest field that our

eyes can look upon. And thus hath the wisdom of God in one and the same original word or phrase included two deliverances, of which the one is a map unto the other.

The Lord liveth, saith the prophet, *which brought out the children of Israel*, that is, in the vulgar and typical sense, from the land of the *north;* but in the full or mystical sense, (which the prime or proper signification of the word affords,) from the land of *darkness.* Thus may *Ramah* in the prophet be taken literally for the town so called, and yet import as much in the evangelist as *heavens high.* The voice of weeping might first resound in Ramah, but at this time pierce the very heavens.

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,
456 saith the psalmist[k], *then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing*, or, as others read, *with joy.* The matter of this their joyful singing was so remarkable, that it did move the very heathens to say, *The Lord hath done great things for them.* Now unto every degree of this their typical joy, which was exceeding great, we must allow a degree of heavenly joy for our spiritual deliverance as far surpassing it, as the miles which we travel do the scales of miles in a map, or as the degrees which we observe in the heavens do degrees in the earth. Their deliverance from the taunts and mocks, from all the injuries which they suffered by idolaters in the north land was the type or map; the reality hereto answering was our deliverance from the powers of darkness, and from the society of infernal spirits. Their restitution to *sing the Lord's song in his temple* was as the terrar; the inheritance itself hereby signified let him decipher that hath been *rapt up into the third heaven, and*

k Psalm cxxvi. 1, 2.

heard voices which cannot be uttered[1]. Let us rest contented with such descriptions as he hath made unto our hands, and we may safely use; let it suffice us for our comfort, that we are made *partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, that *the Lord hath delivered us from the powers of darkness, and hath translated us to the kingdom of his dear Son.* Col. i. 13.

SECT. XV.

THOUGH Israel be mentioned in the covenant drawn by the prophet, yet the apostle extends the meaning of it to all the faithful. It was first to be drawn in the Israelites' names, the Gentiles being then in nonage, and not capable of any state in it before their manumission by Christ. Amongst all the sons of Abraham according to the flesh, it is very probable the kingdom of heaven did in the first place belong to these young infants. The papists willingly dispense with them for want of merits, and so they might do with themselves, so they would mend their deeds and doctrine. As for these babes, though they had not done so much good as St. Francis or St. Dominick, yet I am sure they have done less harm than their angelical doctor, or others, with whose treasure they hope to purchase heaven; but though Rachel's sons had lived much longer to do much good, and no harm, they must have sought heaven by mere favour, not by plea, or title of inheritance.

Sed quia nec fato, merita nec morte peribant.

Inasmuch as they neither died by the course of nature, nor for any crime pretended against them or their parents, (as children ofttimes die violent deaths by chance of war, intended against their elders,) but

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 4.

merely for Christ's sake—as if they had been so many champions clad in the king's coat-armour to intercept the blows that were directed against him—I will not question by what authority the ancients have canonized them for saints and martyrs[m]: the fulfilling of this prophecy I have in hand doth in my judgment warrant no less: at least, if there were no other way to salve the literal and exact fulfilling of this last clause, *Thy*
457 *children shall return again unto their borders*, we might maintain it as more probable than any interpretation that they which contradict this can make of our evangelist, that amongst those *many bodies of the saints which after our Saviour's resurrection awaked out of their sleeps, and came out of their graves into the holy city*, Rachel was one, and then received these her martyred children raised to life again. It holds very good analogy with the sweet disposition of Divine Providence, and therefore with the doctrine of faith, to think, as these infants were the first that witnessed Christ's birth by their bloody death, so they should be the first partakers of his second birth, and companions of his joyful resurrection. It is observed by some late judicious divines, that pillars or statues were erected by ancient patriarchs neither as trophies of victories past nor as mere memorials of deceased friends, but as tokens of a future victory over death, and pledges of an everlasting life. If the observation (as I have no reason to mistrust it) be authentic, the remarkable erection and long preservation, with some special mention of this pillar or statue of Rachel's sepulchre, portends some extraordinary hope or manner of her resurrection. And seeing it stood in the borders of

[m] Our church, in appointing the gospel for the feast of Innocents, acknowledgeth them to have been true martyrs. See Rev. xiv. 3, 4, 5.

Benjamin and Judah, it might well serve as a body to that motto which the prophet gave her for her comfort, *Spes erit in novissimo, There is hope in thy end:* and both put together make a complete emblem or prophetical type of a joyful resurrection to betide her and the sons of her sorrow, *that both should return again unto their borders.*

SECT. XVI.

HOWEVER, these here mentioned are the last gushes of Rachel's tears, whose mourning veil was rent with the rocks and monuments of our Saviour's resurrection, and these bitter outcries about Beth-lehem and Jerusalem (in testification that a Ben-oni, *a man of sorrows,* was then born) being the period of all her ominous complaints, have been drowned with the contrary cry from Jerusalem which is above; since the true Benjamin or Ben-oni was there enrolled under the name or title *Benjamin,* that is, of one exalted to the *right hand* of Majesty. *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away:* Apocal. xxi. 2, 3, 4. If the daughters of Judah and Benjamin henceforth weep for their dead, Rachel hath wiped her cheeks, and cannot wet them again; she hath forgotten to take up her mourning song.

CHRIST'S ANSWER UNTO JOHN'S QUESTION;

OR,

AN INTRODUCTION

TO THE

KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST,

AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

DELIVERED IN CERTAIN SERMONS, IN THE FAMOUS TOWN OF NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—JOHN v. 39.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

RICHARD,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE, LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM,

MY VERY HONOURABLE GOOD LORD AND DIOCESAN.

RIGHT REVEREND AND HONOURABLE,

BEING here detained upon occasions made known in part unto your Lordship, I thought myself bound in duty and conscience to render an account as well of my time spent in this my absence, as whilst I was present at my Charge; though this I cannot for this time perform, save only in part. These papers, which I now consecrate to your Honour's protection, contain only the firstfruits of my labours in that worthy and famous congregation which it pleased your Lordship about a year ago (for which I ever rest yours bounden) to commit unto my trust. Yet these being all that I took with me to peruse in my absence, which I well hoped should have been much shorter, these are all that I could at this time present your Lordship withal, humbly beseeching they may be accepted as an undoubted pledge of my duty and observance to your Lordship, and of my unfeigned desire and resolution to set forward that worthy and religious congregation (from which I have received

much true comfort and many kindnesses) in the ways of truth, as well by my pen in my absence, as by my voice whilst I am present. So, commending this Introduction to your Lordship's patronage, and your Lordship to the gracious patronage and protection of the Lord Jesus, I humbly take my leave.

Your Lordship's,

In all duty and service,

THOMAS JACKSON.

From my study in Corpus Christi College, in Oxford,
December 20, 1624.

A brief View of the principal Parts of the Discourse following.

. THE meaning or purport of John's question, *Art thou he should come, or do we look for another?* Matt. xi. 3. ge 466 [a].)

I. What did move John to make this question. (Page 467,)

II. What satisfaction the answer here made by our Sa- r might give,

. To ordinary or indifferent auditors; wherein are discussed, (page 470—474.)

1. Wherein true blessedness (which our Saviour here promiseth to all) doth consist. (Page 475. parag. 14. to page 480. parag. 19.)

2. How the miracles heard and seen by John's disciples do prove, that Jesus, who wrought them, was the author and donor of all these good things or degrees of goodness, wherein true blessedness, in the opinion and judgment as well of heathen philosophers as of Christians, doth consist. (Page 479. parag. 19. to page 484. parag. 22.)

. Unto John; wherein are discussed,

1. The manner how the faith of the patriarchs and of the prophets themselves was grounded upon Divine predictions, and ratified by the events answering unto them; that even the patriarchs and prophets themselves might err in their apprehensions or applications of God's word revealed unto them, until their apprehensions were rectified by new revelations, or their applications corrected by the exhibition of the event or effect foretold. (Page 486. parag. 24. to page 496. parag. 34.)

[a] The pages here referred to will be found in the margin of this edition.

2. The particular places of scriptures, from whence the Pharisees had their prenotions concerning baptism; and on which John's faith or belief concerning our Sa-
464 viour's person or office, or his own ministry, was grounded; with the signs of the time that did expound them. (Page 501. parag. 37. to page 533. parag. 66.)

3. What correspondency the two places of scripture, to which our Saviour in this answer referreth John, have with the former places wherein John's faith was grounded, and with the signs of the time or miraculous events here related. (Page 533. parag. 66. to page 549. parag. 81.)

IV. How the general conclusion, *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me*, is inferred from the premises—What it is to be offended in Christ—Which be the special roots of this offence, and how they may be avoided. (Page 549. parag. 81. to the end.)

CHRIST'S ANSWER

UNTO

JOHN'S QUESTION;

OR,

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST, AND HIM CRUCIFIED.

PART I.

MATTHEW XI. 4, 5, 6.

Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

THIS is life eternal, saith our Saviour, John xvii. 3, *that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* The knowledge of *the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent,* are so enwrapt and linked together, that he which hath the latter hath the former, according to the saying of our Saviour, *He that hath seen me hath seen my Father,* John xiv. 9. This knowledge of Christ, and of him crucified, was all that our blessed apostle St. Paul esteemed or determined to know amongst the Corinthians, and all that I shall desire to know amongst you; and is, as I hope, if not the only, yet the special point which any of you desire to be made known unto you by my ministry, whether public or private. What

it is to know Christ and the virtue of his cross, which be the special or most useful branches of this knowledge, and in what rank or order the several branches grow, shall, by God's assistance and your desired patience, be discussed at large hereafter, in unfolding of that forecited saying of our apostle to the Corinthians in his first epistle, chap. ii. 2; which, if God permit, shall be the main subject or theme of my meditations in this place.

You will give me leave to make my entry or passage into a subject so large, so ample, and so useful, by degrees and leisure. Now, ere we can attain unto the true knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent, and of him crucified, we are to inquire upon what grounds we believe or know that the man Jesus, whom the Jews did crucify, whom we preach, and on whom
466 we believe, was he whom God hath sent, or he whom God before all worlds had ordained to send, into the world; for albeit God in sundry ages sent many messengers unto his church, though such as he sent did come in person, and discharge their function, yet when we read of *him that was to be sent*, or of *him that was to come* [a], without further addition, circumlocution, or paraphrase, we must take these as titles which may not be communicated unto many, as being truly meant but of one, which is Christ the Lord: and under these general or royal titles the promised seed, or Messias, was apprehended, and known by the best of God's servants, as well before the law was given, as whilst the law was ready to expire and determine.

2. Thus we read, Exod. iv. 13, that Moses, after many pretences and excuses to avoid the embassage unto Pharaoh for the deliverance of God's people,

[a] *He which was to be sent*, or *He which was to come*, were from the beginning known and proper attributes of the Messias.

lastly concludes with this request; *O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send;* which is so much, in the interpretation of the ancients, as if he had said; 'Lord, I know thou hast ordained from the beginning to send an authentic messenger unto the world for the deliverance of thy people, one that should speak as never man spake, and do those works which no man besides can do; and I beseech thee to send him at this time unto Pharaoh, to let thy people go; for this is a work worth his pains.' I know some later writers reject this interpretation, but their exceptions against the ancient interpreters are not concludent, and therefore not to be admitted, especially when the better sort of later writers, with whom I accord, do embrace the interpretation of the ancients. Again, although God had sent John Baptist on as great embassage as this of Moses—he was sent as a messenger to prepare the ways of the Lord—yet he doth not affect, but doth utterly disclaim this title of being *him whom God hath sent*, as knowing it to be peculiar unto the Saviour of the world; for so he speaks of him in opposition unto himself, John iii. 34: *For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth the Spirit not by measure unto him.* For this reason John was sent from God as a messenger to prepare his ways, who never doubted of his miraculous birth and conception; John, who had heard and seen him declared by voice and vision from heaven unto Israel, even after he himself had proclaimed him to be *the Lamb of God, which was to take away the sins of the world*, yet, for a period or upshot of all that he desired to know concerning Jesus's person, his office, his actions in this life, compriseth all in this short interrogative—*Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?*

3. Unto this question or demand, being the entire tenor of John's solemn embassage, and the sum of all which he desires to know concerning Christ, our Saviour vouchsafes no other answer than what hath been read unto you, *Jesus answered*, &c.

Now if we consider that ample testimony which our Saviour in the words following my text did give of John in audience of the multitude, to wit, that he was *a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet;* that of all that *were born of women there was none greater than John;* charity and Christian modesty will constrain us to presume that this question, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* being thus solemnly by John proposed, was no idle, but a serious and useful question; fit, not only for him, but for posterity to be resolved in. Again, if we consider that
467 this answer which I have read unto you was made by our blessed Saviour, we stand bound upon our allegiance to believe, that as the question was serious and useful, so the answer was pertinent, full, and satisfactory: all this is most plain in the general; but if we descend unto particulars, the difficulties are two:

Two general queries; the one concerning John's question, and the other concerning Christ's answer; which may be taken for the two general parts of this ensuing discourse.

(1.) First, from what affection or disposition of mind this question should proceed, or what it was that should occasion John to make it.

(2.) Secondly, in what manner and how far our Saviour's answer, or the words which I have read unto you, do fit the occasions which moved John to make the question, or fully satisfy the question itself.

4. Concerning the first point, to wit, from what affection or disposition of mind this question should proceed, or what should move John to make it, there is greater variety or diversity than opposition or contrariety of opinions amongst the learned. Justin Martyr and Tertullian were not afraid to say and deliver

in writing to posterity, that John himself did at this time truly doubt and distrust, whether he that wrought these miracles here mentioned in my text were the promised seed or no [a]; and that out of this doubt or distrust in himself he sent this message unto our Saviour, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* Tertullian, in his fourth book against Marcion, goeth further, and saith, that after our Saviour did enter upon his prophetical function, and took upon him to instruct the people publicly by word and miracle, the Spirit of God which was given to him not by measure, beginning now to dilate and shew itself unto the world, did withdraw or call in that portion of the spirit of prophecy wherewith John Baptist had formerly been endued, *to prepare the ways of this his Lord,* as great flames draw flying sparkles to them, or suck out the lesser lights or candles that are near them: as if John Baptist himself, when he said, *Oportet illum crescere, me autem decrescere,* had unwittingly or otherwise prophesied, that the spirit of prophecy should decrease in him as it did increase or more amply manifest itself in our Saviour. Yet this interpretation, I must tell you, though avouched by two of the most ancient fathers whose writings are now extant, is slenderly seconded by later writers, whether of Romish or reformed religion. Maldonate, a learned Jesuit, doth thus censure them, or rather the times wherein they lived; *In illa nimirum ætate, nondum satis culta theologia hujusmodi spinas aliquando proferebat:* that is, that goodly garden of God, which we call *divinity,* "was not in that age so well dressed, but that it did sometimes bring forth such thorns and brambles as these were." Should the best of our writers or preachers speak on this fashion of the an-

[a] Vid. Maldonat. in hunc locum.

cient fathers, the Romish church would take it as a sufficient testimony to condemn us for heretics; howbeit we will not condemn it as an heresy in her children for speaking or writing thus, but rather wish they would be constant to themselves and unpartial toward us, to permit us that liberty which they take in refusing the authority of the most ancient fathers, especially in the interpretation of scriptures. Others there were, and these very ancient too, which disliking Justin Martyr's and Tertullian's interpretation of this place, would qualify it thus: John the Baptist did not question nor doubt whether Jesus whom he had baptized were the Son of God, the promised and
468 long expected Messias or no, but *utrum esset ad inferos descensurus,* "whether he were to taste of death himself, or whether he would come to rescue the dead from the power of hell and the grave." *Et in hanc sententiam,* saith the same Maldonate, *maxima pars veterum concesserunt:* "the greatest part of the ancient fathers were," by his confession, "of this opinion concerning the interpretation of this place." But will he therefore subscribe unto them, or rest upon their interpretation? No; he hath no reason so to do, seeing the fathers themselves did follow this interpretation because as then no better was found out. We have gained thus much from this learned Jesuit for some after disputes—that latter ages may find out some better exposition of principal passages of scripture, than most of the best and ancientest fathers knew.

5. What then is that better exposition of this place whereunto he and most of his fellows subscribe? It is this: John did not move this question out of any doubt or distrust of his own, but only for the better instruction of his disciples, in whom he could hardly beget any true conceit or estimate of our Saviour's

worth; so factious they were for their master, that they disdained or envied that our Saviour should have more followers than he had. So it is storied, John iii. 25, 26: *There arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him.* Now seeing John, as the authors of this interpretation think, could not assuage this humour in his disciples, (which he earnestly labours in the forecited place,) but the more he debased himself in comparison of Christ, the more worthy they thought him of greater honour; he therefore now sends them unto Christ himself, whose instructions being graced with miracles, he presumed would be more effectual in them than all the exhortations he could bestow upon them. The main stream of later interpreters, as well protestants as papists, runs this way; and if the question did arise from distrust or diffidence, these imperfections were in all likelihood more incident to the affectionate scholars than to the sanctified and prudent master.

6. Others there be, but not so many to my remembrance as to make a few, which would derive the former question, *Art thou he that should come*, &c.? not from any doubt, much less from any diffidence or distrust, either in John or in his disciples, but rather from joy of heart in John, as if it were rather *vox exultantis vel jubilantis, quam dubitantis.* And it cannot be denied but that men ofttimes make pathetical expressions as well of present joy as of dislike or discontent by way of interrogation: thus honest housekeepers or hearty hosts will sometimes welcome their grateful and long expected guests with this or the like

salutation, 'Are you come?' when they cannot truly doubt whether they are come or no, if they will believe their own senses. We see the wisest men not apt to give swift credence unto extraordinary good news, lest their sorrow should prove greater if the report should prove false; and naturally, when excessive joy either springeth too fast or groweth too rank, we seek to allay or snip it by a fictitious or imaginary distrust of those truths whence it groweth, of which we cannot make any real or constant doubt. So he saith in the poet,

> Horret adhuc animus, manifestaque gaudia differt,
> Mens stupet et tanto cunctatur credere voto.

469 7. I dare not take upon me to determine which of these four several interpretations is the best, but surely the second, though most followed by the ancients, is farthest wide from the evangelist's meaning. And methinks it were easy to find out a fifth, which might challenge as great a share or portion of probability as any of the former can do. For my own part, as I dare not impeach John himself of any doubt or distrust, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian do, so I cannot account it any sin in John, or any impeachment to his dignity, if at this time he sought the confirmation of his former belief in Christ by new documents, or some fresh supplies of inward comfort, to allay the tediousness of a hard lingering durance, from his mouth that was the fountain of comfort, and had the words of eternal life.

PART II. 470

CHRIST'S ANSWER.

How it is satisfactory to the Question.

8. BUT from what disposition soever the former question, *Art thou he that should come*, &c.? did arise, whether from joy or exultation in John, or from distrust or diffidence in his disciples, or partly from the one and partly from the other, (nor are the divers opinions concerning this point incompatibly opposite,) there yet remaineth a question of greater difficulty, and of far more useful inquiry, for right unfolding the contents and pith of my text. The question is this, How this answer of our Saviour could possibly either confirm or ratify John's former belief of Christ's person, office, or actions, or add any increase to his knowledge or comfort; or, lastly, give any part of satisfaction to the distrust or diffidence of his disciples? seeing there is nothing more contained in this answer than John and his disciples undoubtedly knew before. For so it is said in the second verse of this chapter; *When John being in prison had heard the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* Now what works done by Christ could John hear of in prison which were not truly miraculous, which were not the very same with those which our Saviour in my text informeth John to have been wrought by him, as *restoring of the blind to their sight, the lame to their limbs, the sick to health, the*

dumb to speech, the dead to life? &c. And that which most increaseth the difficulty, amongst other works of Christ which John's disciples, being present, (as it seems by St. Luke vii. 27,) relate unto him, his raising up of the widow's son of Naim from death to life, to the great astonishment of the spectators, was one. Now who did ever know a man truly dead, as this widow's son was, who was not withal more than deaf, more than dumb, more than blind of both his eyes, more than lame of arms and legs, of feet and hands? Wherefore, inasmuch as John knew before that Christ had *raised him up that was dead, and made him sit up and speak, and delivered him to his mother*, he could not be ignorant that he had made one that was more than dumb to speak, one that was more than halt to go, one that was more than blind to see. What satisfaction then could this answer give, either to John or to his disciples, both of whom knowing thus much before, especially seeing the one of them at least, as most interpreters think, did distrust or doubt whether Christ (notwithstanding all this) were *he that should*
471 *come;* and both of them could not but expect some ratification or confirmation of their former belief from his answer?

For clearing this difficulty or exception, we are to examine these two points:

The general division of the second query, proposed parag. 3.

(1.) First, what the particulars here avouched by Christ, and solemnly testified by John's disciples, might naturally and literally import to any indifferent understanding auditor.

(2.) Secondly, what they might intimate or suggest unto John; as no question but this answer did give more full satisfaction unto John than it could do to any other for that time, without his paraphrase or comment upon it.

9. Touching the former point, we say, The very particulars thus solemnly avouched and authentically testified, include in them, even unto ordinary sense and reason, as much as could be expected in the promised Messias, or long expected Redeemer of Israel. Thus much they manifestly include, if we rightly make the deductions, according to the true logical extent of their natural sense. For although it be a rule most infallible, that the truth of an indefinite proposition may be salved or supported by the truth of one particular, as if a man should bargain with a day-labourer, promising him in these indefinite terms, 'to give him so much for his work as other neighbours did,' though some of them gave twelvepence, some tenpence, and others but eightpence; the law would upon these terms or agreements award him no more than eightpence, because it can constrain the hirer only to make good his covenant to the hired, and his covenant is performed if he make his promise true. Now, if but one or two neighbours give but eightpence, and he giveth as much, it is evident he giveth as much as his neighbours do; and this is enough to salve the truth of his promise, according to law and logic; although to use the benefit of either to a poor man's prejudice would ill beseem a man of better note and fashion. In like manner, although our Saviour had only raised the widow's son of Naim from death, or at least if he had given sight to one or two blind men only, or if he had cleansed but one or two lepers, and made only one or two lame men to go, this indefinite answer to John's question, *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up,* Matt. xi. 5, had been so true, as no grammarian or logician had been able to impeach it of falsehood. But though it be

The first member of the general division; what satisfaction our Saviour's answer might give to any indifferent auditor.

certain that an indefinite proposition is ofttimes true, if one or two particulars be true, yet ofttimes such indefinite speeches include a multitude of particulars, and sometimes an universality, or the whole number of all the particulars, which the words can literally comprehend or signify. As, for example, if a man should bid his friend take heed how he deals, for the world is naught, and men are cunning; no man would conceive his meaning to be, that there were but one or two naughty or cunning men in the world; but rather, that the world were in a manner full of them, and that no society or corporation were free from such men. Again, if a man should advise his friend not to rely upon men's words in matters of great consequences without some real assurance, because men are mortal; no man would conceive his meaning to be, that this or that man were mortal, but that all were mortal.

10. That this indefinite speech of our Saviour, *The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk*, &c. did,
472 as we say, *de facto*, include not only some few, but a multitude of all or most particulars specified, is apparent from Luke vii. 21: *At the same hour* (when John's disciples came unto him) *he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many men that were blind he gave sight.* As this indefinite speech did *de facto* include a multitude, so it did *de potentia* include an universality; that is, as there were many blind men received their sight, many sick that were cured, so all of every sort here specified might have been partakers of the like benefit, if the default had not been in themselves or in their friends. There was not a man throughout all the tribes of Israel so blind, but might have had his perfect sight restored unto him, so he had demeaned himself towards Christ as these other blind men did.

Not one man throughout all the land so deaf, so dumb, or lame, but that if their friends would have brought them unto him, and have supplicated for them, being not able to supplicate for themselves, they might have had their perfect hearing, their speech or limbs restored unto them. All the lepers might have been cleansed, all possessed with devils might have been dispossessed and freed from their tyranny, so they would have but humbled themselves under God's hands, and sincerely acknowledged their imperfections and infirmities to have been the fruits of their sin or offences against God their Creator and Redeemer: for thus to be humbled was to become poor in spirit.

11. What is it then which John, or his disciples, or the whole nation of the Jews could expect of Him that was to come, their promised and long-wished-for Messias, whereof these good beginnings related were not sure pledges and full assurances? Most of this people, and with them John's disciples, were sick of their forefathers' disease: they desired in their hearts a king to fight their battles, a man of as goodly presence as Saul was, for personage as lovely as Jonathan, a man as valiant in battle as Judas Maccabæus, as victorious as David, as Samson, or Gideon. But what king of Judah or Israel did ever levy an army without ingrateful exactions from his people? Which of them did ever enrich himself or the state by foreign spoils without impoverishing many of his native subjects? Whilst some of them might sing these or like public songs, *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands*, many a poor widow in private laments the loss of her dearest husband with sighs and tears; *many Rachels mourn for their children*, and cannot be comforted, because the conqueror cannot restore them to life again. Finally, the whole glory and

pomp of war when they are at the height and at the best, are but like a bright and furious flame, which must be continually nourished with man's blood, as a lamp is with oil, or the fire with wood. The best war that ever was undertaken was but *malum necessarium*. It was well observed by the wiser sort of heathen, that no war was ever just but when it was necessary; and, as another saith, *bellum gerimus ut pace fruamur*, "the only right use and end of war is to procure an honourable and secure peace." If such peace may be had without war, they are but fools and unhappy men, unfit members of the world, that will undertake war, and kindle dissensions betwixt nation and nation. Ye have heard perhaps of the philosopher's dialogue with Pyrrhus, that great warrior, to this purpose: when this great Nimrod had swallowed as many several kingdoms or nations in hope, as the Jews could
473 expect their Messias should in one age conquer, the philosopher asked him what he meant to do after he had conquered the Romans. 'Then,' said he, 'I will conquer the Gauls and Spaniards, and when he had done with them he would bend his forces against Africa.' 'But when you have conquered them, and as many more as you intend to conquer, what do you last resolve upon?' His answer was, 'To live merrily and at ease, in plenty and pleasure.' 'Why,' quoth the philosopher, 'this you may do already, without either hazard of your own or your followers' lives; for none of these nations which you intend to vanquish are likely to endanger you, so you will not begin with them.' The present nation of the Jews were of Pyrrhus's temper, and sought after that, as it were, by a round or circle, which was in a manner put into their hands, so they would but have looked near about them, and not have set their proud imaginations upon such

roving projects as Pyrrhus did. Such amongst them as were thus affected would not acknowledge our Saviour to be the Messias, or *him that was to come*, because he was a man of peace, a man of a meek and humble spirit. If another should have come (as shortly after many false Christs did arise) which would have animated them unto war against the Romans, the most of them, such as loved peace especially, would quickly have been weary of him. What then? was there nothing which both sorts, the proudest and humblest, the peaceable and contentious, did alike affect, and hope to see accomplished by their promised and long expected Messias? St. Augustin tells us of a mimic, or jester, (a kind of artificial fool,) which undertook to tell every man in the town or city where he dwelt what he thought or desired. When they were assembled to try his skill in the public markets, all he had to say was this, *Vultis vos omnes vili emere et caro vendere;* "All of you desire to sell dear and buy good cheap." But, as this reverend father observeth, there was more mimic wit than solid truth in this conceit: for many come to markets which neither have mind to buy nor to sell, but to look on: amongst such multitudes as mind buying and selling, some good men there be, which would desire to use a conscience in both. But, saith the same father, if he had said, "All of you, as well the buyer as the seller, as they that come only to hear or see, desire to be happy," his speech had been uncontrollably true: for happiness only is that which all men naturally desire.

12. There is no petty good but is desired by some or other; that is the chief or prime good (as the ancient philosophers have defined it) which is desired by all. Did they collect this only as men, or doth not the scripture either say or suppose the same as a ground

of truth? *Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.* Haggai ii. 6, 7. In what sense our Saviour Christ (for of our Saviour Christ this place is undoubtedly meant) should be enstyled *the desire of all nations*, is a question which hath perplexed some good preachers, and may exercise the wit of a good interpreter. First, how could the Gentiles, which were far more than a major part of all nations here intimated, be said at that time to desire him, in whom they did not in any sort believe, whom they did not at all expect? For how should they expect him, how should they believe in him of whom they had not heard? The Jewish nation
474 indeed, or seed of Abraham, had heard of him, and did expect him; and yet as the prophet had foretold, so it came to pass, that *when they saw him, they saw no beauty in him that they should desire him*, Isaiah liii. 2. And was it possible that he should be *the desire of all nations* whom no nation did desire? Yes; inasmuch as God had consecrated him to be the only fountain of that happiness which all men, which all nations naturally do desire, and which is all that any man of what nation soever, Jew, Gentile, Greek, or Barbarian, can desire, he is truly enstyled by the prophet *the desire of all nations.* To say that as many as desired happiness did desire our Saviour Christ, can seem no paradox, if we consider (what no philosopher will deny) that even such as follow poisoned pleasures seek after happiness and life in these by-paths, which lead to death and misery: though most men take the highway to death and misery, yet no man desires to die or to be miserable, but their contraries.

13. So that our Saviour's answer, though it seemed doubtful in the premises, is in conclusion as perfect as if he had directly and expressly said; 'Go, tell John that I am he that was to come, and that you are not to expect another, seeing whatsoever you can expect or desire in any one or more, whom you may imagine yet to come, *that* you may have in me alone; for true blessedness is all that you or any man can desire, *and blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.* Matt. xi. 6. Isaiah liii. 2. But though John and his disciples could desire no more of him that was to come, than to be truly blessed in him, yet might they desire some further proof than his bare assertion or authority, that they might be truly blessed in him: for this blessedness whereof he speaketh was none of those things which they did hear or see, seeing it cannot be known by corporal sight or hearing; it is like that new name spoken of in the Revelation, *which no man can read, but he which hath it.* All this is true; yet, notwithstanding all this, the things which they did hear and see were undoubted pledges and visible assurances of this invisible blessedness which here he promiseth, and of which every man might have undoubted experience in himself, so he would not be offended in him: for though our Saviour with far better reason might, yet did he never exact such absolute belief unto his words, as the pope or visible church of Rome do to theirs, to whatsoever they shall decree, without either express warrant or testimony of God's word written before, or experimental knowledge in themselves. This will better appear in the second point proposed, which was, what these words did intimate or suggest to John.

The points now to be inquired after are two:

(1.) First, what is it to be blessed and happy in

Christ, or wherein this happiness or blessedness which here he promiseth doth consist.

(2.) Secondly, how these particulars here mentioned, *the blind shall receive their sight, the lame walk,* &c. do induce or infer this universal conclusion, ***Blessed is he, whosoever is not offended in me.***

Wherein the blessedness here promised doth consist.

14. The former will draw the latter after it; and in discussion of the former, I must crave pardon to acquaint you with the opinions of such of the heathen as sought to be wiser than the rest, (that is, of their philosophers,) concerning happiness or felicity. Not that I rely upon their saying or authorities, but seeing the problem proposed is general, to wit, what satisfaction this answer could give to any unpartial auditor, whe-
475 ther Jew or Gentile, I must give such satisfaction as is fittest to such, perhaps, as are too much addicted unto the philosophy of the heathen; besides, it will be a good means for us to find out the right and safe way, if we shall observe where others have gone wrong, or plunged themselves

To the former. The very name or common notion of *blessedness, happiness,* or *felicity,* doth import as much as *summum bonum,* "the chief or supreme good," or crown of goodness; that (as we said before) which all men naturally do desire, and which is all that any man can desire; that which is only able to satiate all the desires or appetites of the human soul. It is agreed upon, as well by the wisest of the heathens as of Christians, that *bonum* and *appetibile* are terms convertible; that is, they mutually fit the one the other, as the measure and the thing measured: whatsoever is good is desirable, and whatsoever is desirable is good to the party which desires it, at least as for the present he stands affected; and that only is truly good which ought to be desired. For the rectifying of

our desires the heathens went thus far aright—That the desires of sense, or the inferior part of the soul, were to be guided and directed by reason: we Christians know that even reason itself must be regulated by the word of God, or rule of faith, otherwise it will outray farther in its desires than sense without the check or control of reason could do. The things which we may desire are of three sorts:

1. Profitable,
2. Pleasant, or
3. Honest.

All these three branches of goodness, or rather these several sorts of good things, are required unto true happiness; yet so, as true happiness, or the chief good, consists properly in the fruit of the third branch or stem, to wit, of *bonum honestum*, in its full growth or maturity. This chief or prime good is not only desired for itself, and for no other end, but it is the end for which all things else, whether they be inferior branches of *bonum honestum*, virtue or honesty, or whether they are pleasant or profitable, are desired. Every branch of *bonum honestum*, of virtue or honesty, though it be to be desired for the chief and prime good, yet is it to be desired in itself and for itself; so to be desired for itself, that we must be content to lop off all the other branches of pleasure and profit rather than hinder the growth of this. *Godliness*, saith the apostle, *is great gain;* and it hath been an old proverb among you, "It is a good sport to be honest." The issue of that sport, delight, or gain, whereby our growth in godliness or honesty may be prejudiced, is loss and grief. Things pleasant are to be desired in themselves and for themselves; yet so far only, and at such seasons, as their desire may not

hinder the pursuit of things good and honest. Our desire of these latter must give bounds or limits to the desire of the former. Things pleasant may be desired in greater measure than for themselves they can be desired, in case they bring advantage to the course of honesty, of piety, or virtue. Things merely profitable are not desirable at all for themselves, or in themselves, but only so far as they are conducent to the purchase of delights lawful and honest, or of honesty itself: for which reason profit, as the more judicious schoolmen determine, is no true and proper branch of goodness, nor are things merely profitable truly and inherently good, but good only by extrinsical denomination, or by accident. Of this rank is physic, which no man
476 desires for itself, or in such manner or measure as he desires wholesome food; it is in its nature distasteful to sense, yet to be desired as a means for procuring health, which all men desire for itself; because it is truly good and pleasant, and yet withal to be desired as a means profitable for the exercise of piety, and performance of virtuous actions. Of this rank likewise is that which most men, upon a common error, most of all desire, to wit, gold or coin, or other externals, before we have occasion to use them. These are not good in themselves, save only with reference to the procuring of things pleasant or honest. In countries wherein gold is not by custom referred to this use, men esteem it no more than Æsop's cock did the pearl. Thus we have read of a dumb dialogue between a poor Indian and a wandering Spaniard that in his hunger offered gold for a pullet, which the Indian attempting to chaw with his teeth, restored it again, with this intimation; 'That he could eat the pullet, but he could not eat the gold:' other use of this metal he knew none; and

being not useful, it was not good to him, though of more worth to one of us than all the quick goods which the poor Indian had.

15. But more pertinent to our present purpose is that division of goodness, or good things, which the philosophers have made unto our hands in this very argument whereof we treat: for unto felicity, or true happiness, they require a threefold rank or order of good things. The first was, as they call them, *bona fortunæ*, the goods of fortune; which we call means and maintenance; as monies, lands, goods, possessions, revenues, or whatsoever other externals. The second, *bona corporis*, as health, strength, agility, beauty, or comeliness of body. The third was *bona animi*, the endowments of the soul or mind, which they comprehended under the names of virtue, moral and intellectual: of whose several parts, some did answer in proportion unto health or welfare of the body, as justice, sobriety, temperance, in which the health of the soul did even in their judgment more specially consist, as the strength or agility of the soul did consist in valour, wit, or resolution: as for arts and sciences, these they accounted as the attire or external comeliness of the soul. Their chiefest errors in these disquisitions were, that they thought (at least some of the wisest of them) that this felicity or happiness might be complete in this life. Howbeit some of them did think that no man was to be accounted or adjudged happy before his death. Not that these men, for aught we can gather, did hope for any extraordinary happiness after death; but that such happiness or prosperity as man is capable of in this life, and such as they observed some men to enjoy, was so brickle and uncertain, as no man could safely pass his sentence of them, whether they were happy or no, until they had finished their course

of life. But the greatest error in this argument (wherewith the greatest philosopher himself was overtaken) was, that this happiness might be attained unto by good education, or by the wit and industry of man; for he denieth it to be the free gift of God. But we Christians believe and know, that if all good things be the gift of God, then the chief or supreme good must be the extraordinary and special gift of God: and yet withal we must consider, that God, who giveth all good things freely, never casteth such precious pearls as this unto swine. Although it cannot be purchased by man's industry, yet God giveth it only to the industrious, only to such as seek after it with the best faculties and
477 endeavours of their souls, content to forego all things else for the purchase of it. But of this hereafter.

16. Yet herein Aristotle and other heathen philosophers were more orthodoxal than some rigid stoical Christians, in that they thought no man could be truly happy without health of body, or whilst he continued in want and penury, much less whilst he continued in such pains and torments as Regulus or other like virtuous or good patriots did endure rather than they would wrong their conscience or undo their country. He that shall accuse these heathens as carnally minded in this, considereth not that in thus accusing them he condemneth the generation of the just. Our apostle St. Paul had greater peace of conscience than Regulus or any other Roman could have. That part of happiness which consisteth in the health and welfare, or other endowments of the soul, was as complete and perfect in him during this life as any man whilst clothed with mortality can expect; yet saith he of himself and others, even of all that were alike minded as he was, *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable,* 1 Cor. xv. 19.

What occasions soever other good Christians of these times had to join with him in this complaint, his own occasions to speak, to think, and write as here he doth, are elsewhere by him specified at large, and are most just: *Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?* 2 Cor. xi. 23—29.

17. These grievances of body and perplexities of mind were of themselves rather branches or degrees of misery than of felicity; things in their own nature not to be desired, but avoided, as being in that rank of evils which we call *malum pœnæ*, such as all punishments or chastisements, whether justly or unjustly inflicted, are: for whatsoever is contrary to that which is truly good, must needs be so far truly evil as it is contrary unto that which is in its nature good. Now all *malum pœnæ*, that is, all punishments, chastisements, or bodily grievances, are directly contrary to the second branch of goodness forementioned, which the schools call *bonum jucundum*, the goodness of lawful pleasure, of harmless delight, of blameless

ease or contentment, all which are degrees or branches of felicity. But though these grievances beforementioned by our apostle were in themselves truly evil, yet was it good for him, as it is for all men else, to suffer them for the gospel's sake, or for the confirmation of others' faith. Both parts of this true doctrine or assertion are avouched by the same apostle, Heb. xii. 11: *No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* So that no chastening or bodily grievance which befalleth us for Christ's or the gospel's sake, is so true or great an evil in one
478 sense as it is good in another, to wit, in the first rank of goodness beforementioned that is profitable or useful. All persecutions, whether in body, goods, or name, have the same reference or proportion unto the soul, or to its welfare, health, and happiness, that bitter and unpleasant physic hath unto the body. Now there is no man but will be willing to lay down his bodily life as a wearisome burden, rather than to live continually under the physician's or chirurgeon's hands without any ease or intermission: and yet even the bitterest and most unpleasant physic, such as in itself is to be loathed, is good, and by all wise men to be desired, so long as there is certain hope that it may be a means to ease their bodies of lingering pain or torture, or procure the restauration or long continuance of former and wonted health. In like manner, our apostle St. Paul would have wished never to have professed the Christian religion, rather than to have lived eternally in such persecutions as he sometimes suffered, because they were in themselves evil, and distasteful unto the human nature: notwithstanding, he rejoiceth and glorieth in them, as they have reference to that

exceeding weight of glory and crown of righteousness, for the attaining whereof they were, though not causes, yet as means ordained by God, useful, and for those times necessary. And therefore our Saviour saith, *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.* And again; *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, for my sake.* Matt. v. 10, 11. *Rejoice, and be glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* ver. 12. So then such as suffer persecution for righteousness' sake are blessed, *spe, non re,* whilst they suffer persecution; that is, they are not in the actual possession of that blessedness which they hope for, nor can they expect (as our apostle in the forecited xvth chapter to the Corinthians, verse 19, teacheth us) that their hopes of blessedness in Christ shall be accomplished in this life, because neither the endowments of the mind nor of the body, whose perfection and accomplishment are necessary to true and perfect happiness, can be perfected and accomplished until this corruptible have put on incorruption, and these our mortal bodies become impassible and immortal. As for those external comforts or supplies which are necessary to that small portion of happiness which we have in this life, as meat, drink, apparel, and the like, we shall have no need nor use of them in the life to come. In that life we shall be so fully happy within ourselves, and in the fruition of God, as we shall need nothing without us, nothing besides God's presence and the fruition of ourselves. The want or penury of any thing useful in this life is a degree or part of misery; but not to need them, not to want them, is a portion of true felicity. And for this reason haply it is, that amongst all the good

works and miracles which our Saviour did, we never read that he made any needy beggars exceeding rich in worldly riches, because riches are neither useful nor necessary to that happiness whereunto all his miracles do lead and draw us: but as he did neither make nor promise to make his followers rich, so he would not suffer any of them, whilst he lived here on earth, to continue in want or penury. These evils or degrees of misery in this life he often prevented by miracles when they were ready to befall them.

18. Here we are by the way to consider, that whilst
479 our Saviour was bodily present with his disciples and followers, none of them were in want or need but he instantly relieved them. If any fell sick, he presently cured them; if they were in danger by sea, they could no sooner cry out, *Master, we perish*, but he as soon checked the wind with the breath of his mouth, and turned the storm into a calm: he did not suffer them so much as to weep or mourn, but rather ministered continual matter of joy and comfort unto them: nay, as we read, Mark ii. 18—20, it was a solecism for them to fast whilst he was with them: *When John's disciples or the Pharisees came unto him, and demanded of him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not? Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.* Thus you see a great difference betwixt the estate of his disciples whilst he was with them and whilst he was taken from them: the one was an estate of joy and contentment, without bodily grievance or molestation, the other had his joy

and internal comfort mixed with sorrow of bodily discontentments. What was then the reason of this difference? Surely it was our Saviour's will and pleasure, in affording these contentments which did accompany his bodily presence here on earth, to exhibit a perfect map or model of that fulness of all joy and contentment which we shall be made partakers of by his bodily presence with us in heaven. So then, for conclusion of the first point, and for more commodious passage unto the second, our Saviour, by the miracles here mentioned, and the like, did openly and evidently declare himself to be the Author, Lord, and free Donor of all these three ranks or sorts of good things, which the heathen by light of nature saw to be requisite or necessary for the attainment of true felicity, or in the fruition whereof, in full and perfect measure, true and perfect happiness did consist.

How the particular miracles here mentioned, infer this universal conclusion, *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

19. First, for these externals, which the heathens call *bona fortunæ*, (as meat, drink, apparel, or means necessary for maintenance of life,) without which we can rather receive no contentment than be throughly contented with them, albeit our Saviour gave them in less measure than worldly minds desire them, yet his bounty in bestowing of them did herein far exceed the magnificence of greatest princes, in that he herewith pleasured his disciples without any grievance unto others. This was a foundation of public happiness which no monarch or state-founder could ever lay, in that no man did ever fare a whit the worse because his followers or favourers (how many soever they were) did fare the better. For thus our Saviour plentifully fed multitudes of people in the wilderness without occasioning any dearth or scarcity of bread or victuals unto such as remained in the towns or villages. The relics or offals of the feasts that he made

were always greater than the provision itself. Once we read of his feeding four thousand men with seven barley loaves and two fishes, and the fragments or broken meat was seven baskets full, Mark viii. 20; another time, of his feeding five thousand men with five loaves, when there remained twelve baskets full of fragments. Nor did this his bounty extend only in cases of necessity, or for preventing want or penury, but unto matter of delight or decency. For as he fed thousands of people in the wilderness, where no food was to be had for them without miracle; so, to grace
480 the marriage feast at Cana in Galilee, he turned water into wine, not of the worst sort, but of the pleasantest and cheerfullest taste. Thus when tribute or poll-money was unjustly exacted of him, he did not demand a benevolence from those men on whom he had wrought those mighty cures, or whom he had otherwise benefited extraordinarily; he supplieth himself and Peter with this necessary from a fish, which had no more use or need of money, whereof the Roman Cæsar had want, than the poor Indian had of the Spaniard's gold. So that albeit he sent his poll-money to Rome with others, yet was there not one penny less in Jewry than there was before.

20. But to come to the second sort or rank of good things, which the heathens by light of nature saw necessary unto felicity, as *bona corporis*. What greater bodily happiness could befall the blind or lame, than for the one to be restored unto his perfect sight, the other to the right use of limbs? What could the deaf more desire than to be able to hear, or the lepers than to be cleansed from their leprosy? What so great a bodily blessing, if any at all besides could be bestowed upon the dead, as to be restored to life again? Yet those and many like blessings our Saviour

bestowed upon all that were not offended in him by his mere word, thereby shewing himself to be the Lord and Disposer of all the blessings or parts of happiness which concern the body. And John's disciples might hear and see the parties here mentioned made thus far truly happy by him. Happy they were in respect of all other men; happier by much than those men which still continued blind, or lame, or leprous, or deaf, or in that estate of death from which our Saviour raised these dead here mentioned. Again, happier they were than such men as never had been blind, or lame, or leprous, or deaf, or never had tasted of bodily death. For albeit the blessings of life, of health, of strength, of soundness of limbs, were in themselves (if we measure them by themselves) the selfsame in both; yet these mentioned in my text knew much better how to value or prize these bodily blessings aright, or how to use them to their right end by their former long want or absence, than others could do by their continual presence or fruition of them. Again, happy they were in respect of themselves, or their former estate, much happier in that they were now able to walk, whereas before they had been lame; much happier, in that whereas now they see, they had sometimes been blind; that whereas now they are cleansed, they had sometimes been lepers; in that such of them as now live, had been sometimes dead. For although the habit be in itself much better than the privation, as sight is much better than blindness, health much better than sickness, soundness of limbs much better than lameness, life much better than death; yet sometimes the sufferance of want, or privation of things in their nature good and pleasant, may be more profitable or useful for attaining some greater good, than the present possession or fruition of good

things. Now it was not the habit or present fruition of life and health, not the right use of limbs and bodily senses, but the former want or privation of them, which was as the root or stock wherein the third part of that happiness, which consists in the health or welfare of the soul, was ingrafted. If some of these men had always enjoyed their perfect sight, it is more than twenty to one but that their own right eyes had offended them; and better it were they should have been plucked out than have offended them; but best
481 of all, that they had none to offend them, or draw them from Christ, the fountain of happiness, unto other vanities. If others of them had been always sound of body and limbs, their own right hands or feet would have been as a stumblingblock to them in the way of life, and have hindered them from coming to Christ. If others of them had not been smitten with leprosy, or other like grievous diseases, they had not sought to Christ as to their physician; and not finding him so happy a physician as they found him for the body, they would not so earnestly have sought unto him as the only physician of their souls, although he be usually found of none but such as seek him. Finally, unless the Lord had humbled all of them with some one or other bodily grievance, or with want and poverty, they had not become so humble in mind, or poor in spirit, as now they are; and not being such, they had not been capable of the greatest miracle or best blessing here bestowed, that is, they had not been εὐαγγελιζόμενοι, for so it is remarkably said in the text, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, *the dead are raised*, καὶ πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται, *and the poor* (as our latter English translation readeth it) *have the gospel preached unto them:* much better, I must confess, than some of the ancient fathers, which expound the original, εὐαγγελίζονται,

(being, as the Latins say, a verb common, or, as the Grecians say, *verbum medium*, that is, sometimes active, sometimes passive,) according to its active signification in this place, and render it thus, *the poor preach the gospel.* But, as Maldonate well observeth, for the poor to preach the gospel was never any matter of wonder, and therefore no part of our Saviour's message unto John, as being no point worthy so great a master as our Saviour was, solemnly to teach, or so great a scholar as John was, solemnly to learn. And howsoever the word in the original be rendered by interpreters, the thing signified by it is the greatest miracle in this catalogue. That the gospel should be preached unto the poor, as Maldonate would have it, was *valde mirum*, a great and real wonder. And why so great or real a wonder? Because, saith he, to have the gospel preached unto them was as much as to have a promise to be made kings, as he rightly proves from divers places of this Gospel by St. Matthew. *Quid autem admirabilius quam pauperem regem fieri!* "What more admirable or wonderful, than for poor men and beggars to be made kings!" He further addeth, that although the gospel were equally and indifferently preached to all, yet it pleased our Saviour only to mention the poor, both because that was most strange and unusual, according to the custom of the world, that the poor should have the promise to be made kings, and withal, that he might shew himself to be the Messias, or the Anointed of the Lord, who, as the prophet Isaiah had foretold, *should preach the gospel to the poor.* Thus far Maldonate. But, under correction, the original phrase, πτωχοὶ εὐαγγελίζονται, imports a great deal more than either Maldonate expresseth in Latin, when he saith *Evangelium prædicatur pauperibus*, or than is expressed in our latter

English, *The poor have the gospel preached unto them.* Our former English cometh somewhat nearer the original when it saith, *The poor receive the gospel.* But the vulgar Latin, though it miss in many, yet in this particular best expresseth the meaning of the evangelist, if the Romish priests and Jesuits, which hold it to be authentic, did understand the meaning of it, or improve it to the best sense; for so it renders the original verbatim, *Pauperes evangelizantur.* For
482 right unfolding the contents of this speech, or taking the full value of the original, we are to observe that verbs passive, whether in the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or English, may include or import a twofold passion; the one merely grammatical or intentional, the other real, either natural or supernatural. One and the same verb may sometimes include the former only, sometimes the latter, according to the diversity of the matter or subject whereunto it is applied. To give instance in that speech of Melchizedek, Gen. xiv. 19, 20, *Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth. And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.* Now, though the word in the original be the same, though it be for signification as truly passive when it is said, *Blessed be the most high God,* and when it is said, *Blessed be Abraham of the most high God,* yet we must always note this difference in the thing itself, that whensoever God is blessed by man, as here he was by Melchizedek, man's blessing can produce no real passion or alteration in God, it can add no degrees of bliss or happiness to him. But whensoever man is blessed by God, his blessing always addeth some increase of blessedness either in his goods, in his body, or in his soul. Again, if one man give another poison, the other may be said to have poison

given him, or to be grammatically passive: but it is one thing to have poison given him, and another to be poisoned: this latter includes a real passion or bodily mutation, though from better to worse, from life to death. He that hath a medicine given him is in common speech termed *a patient*, and is grammatically passive: but every one that is thus far passive as to have a medicine given him, is not instantly medicined, cured, or healed; for this includes a real operation or amendment of that which was amiss in the body. In like manner, inasmuch as our Saviour preached the gospel equally and indifferently to all, all that heard him might be alike truly and literally said to have had the gospel preached unto them, if we respect only the grammatical sense and signification of the word: but it is one thing to say that all had the gospel preached unto them, and another thing to say all were *evangelizati:* for this latter was peculiar only to *the poor in spirit;* they only took this stamp or impression of the gospel which was preached to all. Briefly, the original phrase doth literally and naturally import as true or real an alteration or transmutation in the souls of such as were poor in spirit, as the former miracles here mentioned did in the bodies of the blind, the lame, the deaf, the leprous, or dead. Now it is not said that the blind had their sight proffered or promised unto them, or that the lame were only made to walk, or the lepers cleansed, only in hope, or by way of promise: but all of them were truly and actually cured of their infirmities of body: and so no question were the poor in spirit as truly cured, as truly healed of their infirmities of their souls. They had been as truly dead unto the life of the spirit, as those whom Christ is here said to have raised up were unto the life of the body. But now they are raised up to newness of life,

enlightened to see the truth, and enabled to walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. And whereas before they had been the bondslaves of sin, wherewith their souls were more foully stained or tainted than these lepers' bodies were with leprosy, they are now freed and cleansed from the guilt and reign of sin, and made the servants of righteousness. Thus much is
483 included in these last words, *Pauperes evangelizantur;* and this transmutation of their souls was, or might have been, as conspicuous or observable to John's disciples, as the changing of Saul's mind or spirit was unto the Israelites after Samuel had anointed him king, 1 Sam. x. 9. This interpretation of this place is made unto our hands by our Saviour himself, the best interpreter of his own words: for so he saith, Luke vi. 20, *Blessed be ye poor* (setting his eyes on his disciples): *for yours is the kingdom of God.* This blessing of interest in the kingdom of God, here bequeathed by our Saviour unto the poor, is in effect the same with these words in my text, *Pauperes evangelizantur;* of which, their interest in the kingdom of God is the true, real, and formal effect. For the gospel is called *the kingdom of God,* because it instateth such as receive the impression of it, that is, the *evangelizati,* in the kingdom of God or of heaven. *The kingdom of God,* in scriptures is twofold, and hath two importances. Sometimes it importeth *the kingdom of grace,* which the poor in spirit attain unto in this world: sometimes it importeth *the kingdom of glory.* which no man shall attain unto but in the world to come. The kingdom of grace there bequeathed had two parts; the one ordinary, to continue throughout all ages, which did consist in the reign or sovereignty of the spirit over the flesh; the other extraordinary, yet usual in that time, and did consist in the reign or

sovereignty of such poor men as Christ's disciples were over Satan and his angels. And this part of the kingdom of grace, or this effect of it, was more conspicuous and visible unto others, and was one of those works or miracles which John's disciples might hear and see, and make faith or true relation unto their master. Now the blessedness here promised by our Saviour, or so much of it as men are capable of in this life, consisteth in the former part of the kingdom of grace, that is, in the sovereignty of the spirit over the flesh. Both parts of this observation are set forth unto us by our Saviour, Luke x. 17—20: *The seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.* All the poor which are here said to be *evangelizati* were thereby instated in the kingdom of grace, and made the sons of God, as it is written, John i. 12, *As many as received him, to them gave he power,* ἐξουσίαν, a privilege or faculty, *to be the sons of God,* and heirs apparent unto the kingdom of glory. This is all one as to have their names written in the book of life.

21. But here the Jesuit, at least the monk or begging friar, (who takes the poverty which he voweth, to be an evangelical perfection, containing in it a title of merit to the blessedness here mentioned,) would reply, that by *the poor* mentioned, Luke vi. 20, the poor in spirit only are to be understood, though not expressed, because the poor in spirit are expressed by St. Matthew,

who relates the selfsame story, chap. v, which St. Luke doth in chap. vi: but inasmuch as the story or relation here in my text is not the same with either of the former two, it will not so clearly follow that the poor in spirit are here only to be understood. Yet it is
484 a rule in logic, and it is a rule of reason, *Quæcunque conveniunt in aliquo tertio, conveniunt etiam inter se.* From which rule it will clearly follow, that if as well these words of my text as those of St. Luke vi. 20. be but evangelical expressions of one and the same prophetical prediction, in which the poor in spirit are to be understood, this my text must be meant of the poor in spirit as well as those other words of St. Luke or St. Matthew. But of the consonancy of the evangelist and the prophet, by God's assistance, hereafter.

22. You have heard, and I make no question but you do believe, that whatsoever your hearts can desire, even the fulness of that true happiness which is all that you or any man can desire, is only to be sought in Christ, in whom it may be found by all. For confirming your particular interest in him, and in the blessedness which here he promiseth, the right receiving of this blessed sacrament is of all other means most effectual. For your better preparation to the due receiving of it, it will be available to consider the doctrine which my text affords; that although Christ be a fountain of happiness infinite and inexhaustible; although his death (whose memory we celebrate, whose virtue in this sacrament we seek) be, as it were, the opening of this fountain; yet are the streams of bliss and happiness, which issue from him by his death, derivable only unto such as are not offended in him. Though *the gospel*, as our apostle speaketh, Rom. i. 16, *be the power of God unto salvation*, yet, as my text saith, the poor in spirit only take the impression of it;

even power itself, and goodness infinite, sufficient in itself to save all, though in number infinite, is effectual only in such as are of an humble and contrite heart. Of their humiliation or contrition, or their poorness in spirit, which is here mentioned in my text, that might be truly said which our Saviour doth of Thomas the apostle's faith: *Thomas, thou believest because thou hast seen; happy are they which have not seen, and yet believe.* The most of these men were therefore poor and humble in spirit, because the Lord had humbled, broken, or chastised them, some with bodily blindness, others with lameness, some with deafness, others with leprosy, or like grievous sickness, some with death. However, becoming once truly humble and poor in spirit, though by these and like means, all of them were truly happy in Christ; but much happier and more blessed shall they be whom the Lord having not so grievously chastised in body, yet do become as humble and poor in spirit as they were. The best consideration I can commend unto you for working this humiliation and contrition of spirit is this, that as the ceremonies of the law were but shadows of these things which are now fulfilled in Christ, so all the bodily calamities, which Christ here cured in so many several bodies, were but as so many sensible types or shadows of more grievous maladies in every man's soul, although by nature we do not feel them. Some of them were dead in body, and *all of us*, as our apostle saith, *are by nature dead in trespasses.* Now if we do as truly and heartily bewail this deadness of our souls, as the poor widow of Naim did the bodily death of her only son; then, as our apostle saith in the same place, *we are quickened in Christ*, and he will deliver our souls unto us safe and sound, as he did him unto his mother. Some of those were blind in body; all of

us were dark in mind even from the womb; and if we
485 supplicate unto him with like earnestness to enlighten our minds, as these poor men did to receive their bodily sight, we shall be as happy in this cure as they were in the other. Some of them were halt and lame, and not able to go; and we, after we have seen and known the ways of God, are more unable to walk in them than they were to run a race. Some of them were lepers in body; so are we all by nature lepers in soul. But whatsoever lameness, infirmity, or disease hath befallen our souls by Adam's transgression, or by our own corruption, he is both able and willing to work more miraculous cures upon our souls, than he did upon these poor men's bodies, so we intreat him as earnestly and heartily as they did.

23. None of you, I hope, conceiveth Christ's bodily presence to be either necessary or expedient for curing or healing your souls. No man's faith in scripture is more commended than the centurion's, which did not desire our Saviour's bodily presence, when he offered it, for the healing of his servant. His answer was, *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* Matt. viii. 8. If this acknowledgment were a document of lively faith and Christian modesty in this centurion, what can it be but arrogancy and unbelief in the Romanist, to think himself worthy, not only of Christ's bodily presence under the roof of his house, but under the roof of his mouth, yea in his stomach? But far be all such unclean and carnal thoughts from any here present. Let us steadfastly believe that Christ's word is now as powerful in heaven as it was on earth; yet have we not only his word, but the visible pledges of his body and blood for the healing of our souls. Whatever other defect there

may be in our preparation for receiving these pledges of his passion, let us be sure that our intention to humble ourselves, and amend our lives, be sincere and without hypocrisy.

The second member of the general division, proposed in the Discourse, parag. 8.—*What Satisfaction this Answer of our Saviour did give to John.* 486

24. *Verbum sapienti sat est.* A man of understanding and experience, in part acquainted with any business on foot, perceiveth more by a word or hint, than another of less understanding or experience, altogether unacquainted with the same business, would do by instructions given in folio. Now John, we know, was a man of extraordinary understanding and experience in matters spiritual, specially such as concerned Christ, to whom he was the immediate forerunner, unto which office he was qualified, or set apart from the womb, yea sanctified unto it even in the womb, as you may read, Luke i. 41. As this qualification made him more docile, or capable of good instructions, than other children were, so his father Zacharias was better able to instruct him in the knowledge of Christ, of whose kingdom and office he had prophesied, than any other priest or son of Aaron could. For Zacharias was, for aught that we can gather, the only prophet then in Israel, at least the spirit of prophecy, which for a long time had been as a fountain dried up, did first break forth in him. After that John himself came to maturity of age and understanding, he was directed by special commission

from his God to usher Christ into the world, to induct him into his prophetical function, to declare him to be the Redeemer of Israel, to proclaim him to be the High Priest of our souls, that was to make the full atonement for the sins of the whole world. Now unto John, thus well qualified and instructed in matters concerning Christ, and in particular acquainted with the carriage of all businesses concerning Christ's baptism, or other actions until his imprisonment, this answer of our Saviour Christ (especially being framed out of that prophet's words which had penned John's commission for being Christ's messenger, or preparing his ways, more than six hundred years before either of them was born) would suggest or imply a great deal more than it could do unto any other man, not so well qualified or instructed as John was, and not so well acquainted with the particular passages of scripture whereon John's faith was grounded, nor with the signs of the time by which his faith in the Messias was confirmed.

Now for your better edification in this point, give me leave to break this portion of the bread of life which I have in hand into three parts:

Three branches of this second member.

The first, the general means by which every man's faith or belief in Christ is wrought or grounded, or by which it is or may be confirmed.

The second shall be the unfolding of those particular places of scripture on which John's belief was grounded,
487 as also the signs of the time by which his faith, before his imprisonment, (or before the framing of this question,) was ratified and confirmed.

The third, what correspondency, concord, or consonancy, the particulars here mentioned, and those places of scripture whereunto our Saviour in this answer refers John, or the signs of this very time wherein

this answer was made, have unto the other parts of scripture, or signs of the time by which John's former faith had been established and confirmed. Of these three in their order by God's assistance.

25. Concerning the first point, we all believe and know that God's word is the only rule on which our faith must be grounded, by which we must be builded up, as the house by line or level.

In this general we and the church of Rome agree: the first breach or point of difference betwixt us and them is, whether this word of God, by which the temple of God must be raised, be partly written and partly unwritten? We say, that the whole rule or canon of faith is written, or contained fully in the books of the Old and New Testament. They grant these books to contain part of the rule, but the other part, which in effect they make the principal, is (as they say) contained in unwritten traditions, of whose truth, or true meaning, the visible church for the time being is the sole judge. This indeed is the roof or covering of their edifice, which (as elsewhere we have shewed, and, by God's assistance, shall more fully shew hereafter) doth utterly raze or overthrow the foundation itself, whereon they would seem to put it, to wit, the written word of God, and the truths concerning Christ contained in it. But our purpose is not at this time to shew you in what manner they overthrow the foundation of faith, or word of God, but rather the manner how our faith is grounded on it.

The first branch, concerning the manner how our belief in God's word or in Christ is grounded, to the 36th paragr.

26. Now though it be true which we lately said, that faith must be grounded only on the written word, this saying notwithstanding must be restrained unto the time since God's word unto his church or people by his appointment was committed unto writing. Wherefore you must remember, or take notice, that

there was a time wherein no part of God's word was written: for Moses was the first that committed God's words to writing, the first that made a register or record of what God had spoken unto the patriarchs. Now the belief of the patriarchs was grounded on God's word, though then unwritten, after the same manner as ours is on the written word. For (as you will easily conceive) it is not the writing of God's word which makes it to be the ground or rule of faith. Yet here haply you will demand, to what other end then was it written? To this we answer, that the writing of it by such special registers as God had appointed for that purpose, and the strange preservation of the records written by them, is to us an infallible argument, that what they have written is the words of God, not the words of men. And this, to know that the words which we believe or give credence unto in matters concerning our happiness or salvation are the words, not of any mortal man, but of the immortal God, is the first ground of faith.

The prediction, not of any, but of some special events, argues the authors of the prediction to have been inspired by God.

27. Unto the right grounding of our faith in this first point two things were ever required; the first, prediction, or foretelling things to come; the second was, the event or experiment answering to the prediction. Yet is it not the prediction of any event that shall fall out, though for a long time after, that can argue the prediction itself to have been God's words, or the foreteller of such events to be a prophet: for 488 the astronomers can foretell you the eclipses of the sun or moon for many years before they fall out or happen; yet no man takes their skill as an argument that they are true prophets, or that they are enlightened by the Spirit of God, by which the scriptures were written, or the mysteries contained in them were foretold. But if an astronomer could as distinctly foretell what kind of

weather every month or every day, for two or three years following, should bring with it, as he can foretell what day or hour the sun or moon shall be eclipsed, or in what degree or measure either of their bodies should be obscured or hid from our sight; you would conceive of him as a man more than ordinary, and that he could not know this by ordinary skill or art, no not by the black art itself, or by dealing with the devil. He that could certainly foretell all the particular changes of weather, or the alteration of states and kingdoms, or the several eclipses or illuminations of God's true visible church here on earth for the next generations that are to come, might justly challenge the reputation of a prophet, or messenger sent from God, at the hands of all such as had heard or read his predictions before the truth of them was sealed by their manifest undoubted events. What then is the reason why the certain and known prediction of some events, whose truth afterwards becometh visible and manifest unto the world, (as the eclipses of the sun and moon, or the conjunction of planets, which shall fall out some forty years hence or more,) should not as infallibly argue the assistance of the Divine Spirit, or revelations immediately made from God, as the foretelling of all change of weather, or matters of greater consequences do, as matters of states or kingdoms, or God's visible church? The reason is, because God by his everlasting decree hath appointed the sun and moon their constant and certain course, and privileged them from all possibility of impediment or disturbance in their several courses which either man or infernal spirits can attempt against them: whereas by the same everlasting decree he hath ordained such variety or inconstancy in the air, or other inferior elements, as no wit of man or devil can comprehend

all the possible changes of weather which may happen within some few years following. For though Satan and his angels be enstyled *prince of the air* by God's saints, yet doth not this title any way import that they have absolute independent power, or monarchical sovereignty over the air, but only that he who is the supreme Lord of heaven and earth, of all the world, and of all in it, ofttimes permitteth those infernal spirits, for the iniquity or sins of men, to exercise such power in the air, as he never permitteth them to use or exercise in the higher region, whence they are utterly banished or excluded. So that albeit they ofttimes know much, and more than man by means natural can do, concerning the alteration or change of weather; yet can they know no more concerning these or like effects than God permitteth them to know, or suffereth them in his just judgments to effect and work. Again; for the managing of civil affairs, of government of states or kingdoms, God, by his everlasting decree, hath left unto men such variety of choice, such a contingency in their consultations, such a freedom of will in contriving or projecting their several ends, as it is impossible for any man living in this age, though he should consult with witches or
489 familiar spirits, to prognosticate or foretell what the success or final issue of what he himself at this present projects or plots [a] shall be a hundred, or two hundred years hence. From this faculty, or rather facility in foretelling things of this nature, which for divers generations after shall certainly come to pass, the Lord himself doth plead, and prove his title of infinite wisdom, that he is the only wise immortal God, that besides him there is none that can do or say as he doth. *Produce your cause, saith the Lord* (unto the

[a] Vide Acts i. 6, 7.

heathen gods and their worshippers); *bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you.* Isa. xli. 21—24. And again, chap. xlvii. 5—9: *Sit thou in silence, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called, The lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand: thou didst shew them no mercy; upon the ancient hast thou very heavily laid thy yoke. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever: so that thou didst not lay these things to thy heart, neither didst remember the latter end of it. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children: but these two things shall come to thee in a moment in one day, the loss of children, and widowhood: they shall come upon thee in their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.* This speech (you must consider) is directed in particular to the Chaldeans, who were the most curious inquisitors after things to come; the cunningest soothsayers (as they took and professed themselves) in the world. And for this reason it is the Lord sendeth that peremptory challenge unto them, ver. 12—15: *Stand now with thine enchantments, and with the*

multitude of thy sorceries, wherein thou hast laboured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit, if so be thou mayest prevail. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it. Thus shall they be unto thee with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth: they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

18. Let me give you two instances or examples of things foretold by God (by his prophet Isaiah) concerning the strange alteration of states or kingdoms, both which predictions were exactly and remarkably fulfilled and accomplished; the one about a hundred, the other about a hundred and seventy years after the prophet, from the mouth of the Lord, had foretold them. The former is related in the second Book of Kings, chap. xx. and in Isa. xxxix. 6, 7, 8. The sum of both these stories is this: after Hezekiah had shewed his house and all his treasure unto the king of Babylon's ambassador, which came to congratulate his late recovery from that dangerous sickness of which the prophet Isaiah had by God's appointment cured him, having
490 first secured him, not only of his instant recovery, but of the continuance of his former health, and prolonging of his days by a sign from heaven; the same prophet came unto him, and telleth him that this his kindness or courtesy to the ambassadors, in shewing them his treasury, was *factum male ominatum*, and did abode a future misery to his posterity. *Hear the word of the Lord*, saith Isaiah to Hezekiah: *Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and*

that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Now if we consider the strength of Judah and of Egypt in those times, and the small power which the Babylonians had in respect of his neighbour the mighty king of Assyria, who then laid claim to Judah, the accomplishment of this prediction or prophecy was in all politic esteem or human conjecture more improbable and more incredible, than if a man in this age should take upon him to foretell that the duke of Saxony, or some other prince of Germany, should conquer the Low Countries, France and Spain, and lead all the royal race of both those kingdoms captives unto Dresden, or to some other princely court of Germany, within these hundred years next following. He that should foretell thus much at this present, would be recounted a true prophet or messenger from God in the ages following, by such as lived to see the event or prediction fulfilled or verified. Now there was not one part or circumstance of the former prophecy but was notoriously and remarkably accomplished in Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and their children, both of them being sons to good king Josiah, both of them being confederates with the king of Egypt, whose joined strength could not resist the greatness whereto the kingdom of Babylon, within three or four descents, was grown: for Nebuchadnezzar had made himself lord of Jewry, of Egypt, and the empire of Assyria. The same prophet (which is more remarkable and more admirable) about the same time foretells the sudden desolation of the Babylonian empire before it was

grown to half its height or greatness, and names the party, which was to accomplish the work of the Lord, more than a hundred years before he was born. Isaiah xlv. 6, 7.

29. The accomplishment of this prophecy by Cyrus, the Lord would have as well the Gentile as the Jew to take special notice of, as an impregnable argument or irrefragable testimony of his power, in raising up Cyrus to take vengeance on the Babylonians in the height of their pride for the wrongs which they had done to Judah his sanctuary; an impregnable argument likewise of his exceeding mercy and loving-kindness towards his people, whom Cyrus, after he had conquered Babylon, did set at liberty, and gave them license to re-edify the city and the temple. *Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut,* &c. to ver. 17. The manner of Cyrus's sudden surprising Babylon, in that night wherein they celebrated the feast of their idol Bel, is recorded at large by two heathen writers, Herodotus and Xenophon, as long after this prophecy was fulfilled as the prediction was before it. Their relations of it are so plain and constant unto the predictions of Isaiah and Jeremiah, and
491 specially to the relation which the prophet Daniel hath made, (who was in Babylon when Cyrus took it,) that the incrediblest Gentiles of that age were inexcusable. Now the reason why the Lord seeks to win credit to his prophet in these his strange predictions of alterations in states and kingdoms, was, that neither Jew nor Gentile should have any pretence to distrust the same prophet's more admirable predictions concerning the Messias which was to come; in which predictions

this prophet, above others, is so plain and so plentiful, that he was enstyled by the ancient fathers "the evangelical prophet."

Of the literal and mystical sense of prophecies.

30. Here I must request you to observe, what I must often inculcate or repeat unto you hereafter, that the Spirit of God did from the beginning use a peculiar kind of foreshewing all events which properly concerned the promised Messias, either in his birth, conception, baptism, or principal actions in his death and passion, or in his resurrection and ascension. The alterations of states or kingdoms were for the most part foresignified or declared beforehand only by mere words, by mere prophecy or prediction; but such things or events as concerned our Saviour Christ were foresignified as well by deed and fact as by word, as well by real representations as by mere prophecy or predictions. From this twofold foresignification of things to come which concern the Messias, the ancients have rightly observed two senses of scripture, the literal and the mystical. The literal sense is that which the words upon their first uttering or writing (whether in terms proper or borrowed) directly and immediately import, without interposition of real event, or representation of the mystery foretold, by matter of fact. So that the branches of the literal sense, taken according to its full latitude, (as it is opposed to the mystical or merely typical sense,) may be as many as there be tropes or figures of speech, whether rhetorical or poetical, besides the proper plain grammatical or historical expression of things to come. The mystical sense or meaning is that which is portended by some deed or fact; as, by some legal type instituted by Moses, or by some real event which the sacred historians, or other faithful writers according to their predictions, relate: or heathen historians oft-

times make historical relations of the events which the prophets foretold: and the events so related and foretold become real prophecies of other like events to come; as Isaiah's predictions concerning Cyrus, and Zechariah's predictions concerning Alexander's victories, (being both accomplished divers hundred years before Christ was incarnate,) did mystically foreshadow such events as the evangelists have historically related concerning Christ and the success of his gospel. Whether the allegorical sense be a branch of the literal or of the mystical, or whether sometimes of the one and sometimes of the other, and sometimes of both, (according as the nature of the allegory is,) or whether sure arguments for confirming our faith may be drawn as well from the allegorical as from the plain literal and mystical sense, are points elsewhere discussed. It shall suffice here to admonish you, that our belief (especially as it concerns the mystical sense of scriptures) must be always grounded on the intention and meaning of the Holy Ghost, or of God speaking in scriptures, not on the prophet's present apprehensions of what he speaks, unto whom perhaps part of the Holy Ghost's intention was revealed, the rest being wrapt up and hidden, until the event, or signs of time which it concerned, did more fully unfold it. The
492 mystical and literal sense ofttimes concur; sometimes so as the same words may be univocally verified of the type and of the mystery portended by it. As for example, in Exodus xii. 46. *Not a bone of it shall be broken:* this was literally meant of the paschal lamb, which these words immediately and directly point at; for this was the law of the paschal lamb, that *not a bone of it shall be broken.* And all laws are to be conceived and interpreted according to the plain literal and grammatical sense of the words. But inasmuch

as the paschal lamb itself was a real type or shadow of the Lamb of God, which was to take away the sins of the world by his bloody death upon the cross, the self-same words, which were literally and historically verified of the paschal lamb, were as truly and more exactly fulfilled of Christ, according to their mystical (and yet univocal) sense. And the fulfilling of this mystery was the cause (as I doubt not but you all know) why our Saviour's bones were not broken upon the cross, when the bones of the other two which were crucified with him were broken: God in his wisdom had prevented all occasion of breaking his bones by hastening his death before the other died which were crucified with him. Sometimes the same words may be verified of the type and of the body, not according to their univocal sense or importance, but equivocally or analogically; properly verified of the body, and catachrestically of the type. As for instance, these words, *I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son,* are truly meant both of Solomon and of Christ, but not *secundum univocam rationem.* The title of *the son of God,* as it is communicated unto Solomon with Christ, differs as much as *homo* and *homo pictus,* as *a man* and *a painted man.* Some events there are concerning our Saviour or his actions which were not at all foretold by express words of prophecy, but only foreshadowed by deed or fact, or by some real type or representation; at the least they are not literally foretold in the same places in which they are really foreshadowed. Thus was his death upon the cross really represented by lifting up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, yet not literally foretold by Moses: so was his imprisonment or abode in the grave really foreshadowed by Jonas imprisoned in the whale's belly; but Jonas did not express thus

much by word or prophecy. But of these and the like types we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Of all the testimonies or foresignifications of Christ, or him crucified, those testimonies wherein is a concurrence of foresignifications, as well by fact as by word, are the most pregnant and most concludent against the Jews; and therefore the surest grounds of our belief in Christ. Of the particular manner how arguments for confirming our faith are to be drawn from this kind of testimony especially, God willing, hereafter; whether of these or other testimonies concerning Christ (but of these especially) the belief or knowledge of the faithful hath been or may be either confused and indefinite, or explicit and distinct.

31. The first prediction which God revealed unto man was concerning the forbidden fruit; *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt die.* This prediction our first parents did not believe, until woful experience had sealed the truth of it unto their and our irrecoverable loss, for any thing that they knew or could do. But the truth of the divine prediction in threatening evil, being fully experienced and ratified by their loss, was by God's providence, wisdom, and
493 mercy, an especial inducement unto them for establishing their faith unto his prediction concerning the woman's seed, which was to bruise the serpent's head. *I will put enmity*[b] *between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Gen. iii. 15. In this prediction there is a concurrence of the literal and

[b] The word *enmity* here used is not a term equivocal; and yet the thing signified by it is not univocally the same, as it respects the natural serpent and the man, and the natural man, and the woman's seed and the old serpent; but the same by analogy only or proportion.

mystical sense; a true enmity between the seed of the natural serpent and the natural seed of the woman: howbeit this enmity is but a type or emblem of that supernatural enmity which the spiritual serpent beareth unto the seed of the woman, κατ' ἐξοχήν.

This was the original and fountain of all ensuing prophecies or predictions concerning Christ; and yet even this prediction itself, as most other prophecies, was in respect of the particular manner or circumstances which were to accompany the fulfilling of it, a kind of riddle, until the event, or other declarations of prophecies upon it, and facts answerable unto them, did unfold it. Our mother Eva, no doubt, did in the general believe, that as by man death came into the world, so the deliverance from death should come by man which was to be born of a woman; but whether she did in particular believe that this man, or *seed of the woman*, which was to deliver her and her husband from the curse of death, should be born of a virgin, or of a woman without the consort of man, is more than the analogy of faith, or Christian charity, binds us to believe of her. Their opinion is very probable who think she mistook Cain, her first-born, to be the promised seed, and that out of this too joyful apprehension she uttered these words, *I have gotten, or possessed a man of the Lord*[e]. So the most translations read it, but as the authors of this opinion which I now recite translate, *I have possessed a man, even the Lord*; to wit, the Lord which she expected should redeem them. I know this interpretation is rejected by Calvin and Mercer, two most judicious interpreters of the true literal meaning of scripture, the latter especially, a most exquisite Hebrician. But to countervail their authority, the same interpretation is well

e Gen. iv. 1.

approved by Paulus Fagius[d], who, for aught I can perceive, was amongst Christian writers the first author of it; for whose authority and excellent skill in the Hebrew tongue and Jewish antiquaries, as I will not peremptorily avouch it, so I dare not reject it. The authors of this opinion concerning our mother Eva's mistaking her first-born son for the promised seed, have attributed the like error, though not altogether so gross, unto Lamech the father of Noah. Lamech had as true a prenotion or steadfast belief in this general as Eva had; that mankind should be comforted concerning their labours; that they should be freed from the curse which the first man had brought upon the earth, upon himself, and his posterity; and that this freedom or comfort should be brought unto them by man, by one that was born of a woman. And yet out of his over-rejoicing at the birth of the first son which God had sent him, he did (as these authors think) misapply his general prenotion or belief concerning the promised seed to his new and firstborn
494 son. *Lamech* (saith Moses, Gen. v. 28.) *lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son. And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord had cursed.* But to wave this question, 'whether Lamech did

[d] Diversæ huic lectioni occasionem dedit vocula את quæ æquivoca est ad omnia præmemorata significata. Et quia quisque suo abundat sensu, abundabo ego quoque et meo, simplicissime accipiendo dictiunculam את, ut sit notæ articuli simulatque demonstrationis, ipsissimam rei substantiam, cui jungitur, denotans, hoc sensu; Possedi sive acquisivi virum, nempe ipsum Adonai, q. d. acquisivi illum ipsum virum, qui est Adonai, id est, Deus sive Dominus, quem scilicet pollicitus est mihi Dominus, cum dixit, Semen tuum conteret caput serpentis. Quia enim Eva credidit promissioni de semine mulieris sine dubio existimavit hunc illud esse semen, per quod caput serpentis esset conculcandum.—Paul. Fag. in 4. cap. Genes. pag. 118.

imagine this his son to be him that was to come, or whether besides him he looked for another,' it is questionless that he uttered this speech by the spirit of prophecy; and as the speech itself was verified or fulfilled of Noah, according to its plain grammatical literal sense, so it was exactly fulfilled or accomplished in Christ, according to the full importance of its mystical sense; that is, Christ and his office was as truly and really foreshadowed by Noah himself, or by his office, qualification, or actions, as Noah's office or qualifications were literally foretold or prophesied of in this speech of Lamech. *Noah, after the flood, offered a sacrifice unto the Lord; and the Lord smelled a sweet savour*, or a savour of rest, and upon this sacrifice engaged himself by promise *not to curse the ground again for man's sake.* Gen. viii. 21. Here you see Lamech's prophecy literally verified in Noah: howbeit the sacrifice of Noah was but a smoky shadow of that real and substantial sacrifice which was offered by the Son of God unto his Father [e]. The comfort which Noah afforded unto the world concerning the work and toil of their hands, or the ground which the Lord had cursed, was but a slight surface or lifeless picture of that glorious blessing of life, which Christ, having freed us from Adam's curse, hath by his death bequeathed unto us. *I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.* Rev. xiv. 13. Again, Noah was a preacher of righteousness; Christ was more, &c.: Noah built an ark, into which whosoever entered not did

[e] *Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour.* Eph. v. 2.

perish, into which likewise whosoever did enter were saved from the deluge; so did Christ build one holy catholic and apostolic church, without which none can be saved, in which whosoever is found shall be undoubtedly saved from those everlasting flames wherewith the world shall be destroyed.

32. So then our belief that Christ the son of Mary was the promised seed which was to come, and that he was in part prefigured by Noah, may be rightly grounded on the Divine prediction or prophecy uttered by Lamech; it cannot be safely grounded on Lamech's apprehension or application of this prediction. Herein perhaps he might err, and so might the best of God's prophets err in the particular determination of time wherein their prophecies were to be fulfilled, or in their applications of them to the persons in whom they might conjecture they should be fulfilled. Nor is error in particulars of this nature (so long as men steadfastly believe the general) altogether so dangerous as some men think it, unless it be accompanied with wilfulness or obstinacy; for that is it which turns errors into heresies. Abraham himself, after his belief in God's promises concerning the promised seed was imputed unto him for righteousness, did commit a greater error in misapplication of that very promise, whose belief was imputed unto him for righteousness, than Eva or Lamech did in misapplying God's promise concerning the woman's seed unto their first-born, if haply they did so misapply it: for Abraham, by Sarah's persuasion, thought God's promise or prediction concerning his seed should be fulfilled in the seed or offspring of Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and
495 continued in this persuasion until the Lord rectified it, and set his belief aright by express promise of Isaac's strange and miraculous birth. And the event

answering to this promise or prediction was a real foresignification or prefiguration of the more strange and more miraculous birth of our Saviour. So likewise was the strange birth and conception of Samson, of Samuel, and of John Baptist: for God in his wisdom did dispense these miraculous blessings of fruitfulness upon woman by natural disposition of body or of age altogether barren, that they might serve as inducements for establishing the belief of posterity concerning the most miraculous conception of the woman's seed, κατ' ἐξοχὴν, which had been promised from the beginning. And albeit an angel from heaven might in reason (at least with better reason than any mortal man can pretend) exact belief unto his solemn message or predictions without further proof or experiment, yet the angel Gabriel himself, the great ambassador of the blessed annunciation, would have the blessed Virgin to ground her belief, not only upon his sole prediction, but withal upon the fresh and real experiment of her cousin Elizabeth's strange conception of a son in her old age. For after the delivery of his message, and his rejoinder to her modest reply, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* he finally concludes the dialogue on his part, *Behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.* Luke i. 36, 37. Nor did the blessed Virgin refuse to make trial of the sign which he had given her; for immediately after the angel's departure from her she *repaired unto her cousin Elizabeth*, as the text saith, *in haste*, where she found the angel's prediction fully ratified by the event or fact. For, upon the first salutation of Elizabeth, the child (whose conception the angel told her of) did spring for joy in Elizabeth's

womb; and for a pledge or token that she had conceived by power and virtue of the Holy Ghost, her cousin Elizabeth, upon her salutation, was filled with the Holy Ghost in her heart, and out of the abundance of her heart, thus filled, her mouth did speak and utter that prophetical salutation which the angel had used unto her, with a loud voice; *Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* ver. 42. And by this spirit of prophecy Elizabeth did then know that that blessed Virgin had conceived by the Holy Ghost, and that then the child conceived by her should be her Lord and Redeemer. The blessed Virgin again, upon fresh experiments of these facts fully answerable to the angel's prediction, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and the spirit of prophecy, by which she uttered that excellent saying, *My soul doth magnify the Lord*, &c.

Now the very embassage of the angel Gabriel was really foreshadowed or prefigured by the sending of Isaiah the prophet unto Ahaz, the king of Judah; whereof we read, Isaiah vii. 3. The tenor of the angel's message unto the blessed Virgin was literally and expressly foretold by the prophet unto Ahaz, verse 14: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* Howbeit even in this prophecy, or testimony of our Saviour's birth and conception, there was an ἀποτέλεσμα, that is, a full concurrence of prophecy and type, an express prediction or foretelling of what should afterwards come to pass, and a real overshadowing or representation of what afterwards did come to pass, by matter of present fact or deed; that is, this prophecy was truly verified
496 in the prophet's time, according to its literal or historical sense, and yet again exactly and exquisitely fulfilled, according to the literal and mystical sense, in

our Saviour's birth and conception. The signs of both times concerning the estate of Judah were in proportion the same; but the particular and full explication of this prophecy will come more fitly to be discussed hereafter.

33. For conclusion of the first general point proposed, I would request you to note, that of such foresignifications concerning our Saviour Christ's conception, his birth, his baptism, his death, his passion, as consist in matter of fact or type, some are direct, others are indirect, and signify by contraries. As for example; the first woman was made of Adam by God's immediate hand, not begotten by man; and being thus made, she was an inverted type or shadow, that the second Adam, who was to bruise the serpent's head, was to be made of a woman by the immediate hand of God, not begotten by man. Thus much was expressly foretold by the prophet Jeremiah, chap.xxxi. 22: *Behold, I create a new thing in the land, the female shall compass or enclose a man,* or, *the female shall enclose Gever.* But of this point you may be satisfied, if it please you, elsewhere more at large: I only instance in this particular for this time, to give you notice that some things may be really foreshadowed as well by contraries, or inversion of the circumstances, as by direct types or suitable representations: whether it be this way or that way foreshadowed, the case is all one; as it was with that picture-maker, who, being requested to paint a man and a horse overthrown in battle, painted a horse in a full career with a man on his back; and being challenged for not making such a picture as he was requested to do, he willed the party to turn the upside of the table downwards, and he had as fair and exact a picture of a horse and a man overthrown as he could make him. Of this kind of types was the brazen serpent; it could not be any

direct type of Christ, albeit the lifting up of a brazen serpent was a real type or representation of our Saviour's future exaltation upon the cross. And so was Hezekiah's demolishing of the brazen serpent a real prophecy or representation of our Saviour's bruising the old serpent's head, or rather of his utter destruction of his kingdom, which shall be accomplished at the last day. But the full explication of this type we must defer until we come to unfold the mysteries of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let this suffice at this time for the first general point; to wit, how our faith in Jesus Christ is to be grounded or confirmed: wherein hath been shewed, first, that all belief must be grounded on the word of God; secondly, that we believe these books of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, because they contain as well such predictions or prophecies as real prefigurations or types of Christ and his kingdom, as none but the only wise immortal God could foreshadow.

The scripture is the only infallible rule, by which the true church can be discerned.

34. The use of this doctrine hitherto delivered is the same which shall be the end of all my meditations upon this portion of scripture. The points which I specially aimed at in the choice of it were these: first, to breed or beget a full persuasion in you that these books of the Old and New Testament are sufficient in themselves *to make you wise unto salvation*; that the truth of mysteries contained in them may be sufficiently manifested by their own light, without the infallible proposal or authority of any visible church
497 on earth to give them lustre, or make them visible. Their light is of itself sufficient to enable you to discern all truths expedient for your salvation; and amongst other truths, to discern which of all the visible churches upon earth is the true church of God: and this they sufficiently teach, without any

such notes or properties as the Romish church would obtrude upon you. If in the writings of our own friends, I mean the pastors or teachers of reformed churches, you light upon some notes of the true church—as preaching of the word, and administration of the sacraments—you must conceive their meaning to be no more but this, that these two conspicuous and visible notes are essentially and necessarily required to the constitution of a visible church. They are not, they cannot be any infallible notes for discerning which visible church is true, which false, which heretical, which orthodoxal, no more than to have public meetings, or a form of government established by law or charter, can be a true note for discerning which is the best or ancientest corporation in this kingdom. Now to have public meetings, or a form of government established by law or charter, can be no note or difference for distinguishing one corporation from another, because without these no assembly of men, how great soever, can be truly termed a corporation: and that wherein all agree can be no note whereby to difference or distinguish one from another, or to determine which is the best, which is the worst. Wherefore if the question were, 'Which is the best or ancientest corporation in this kingdom?' this question could no otherwise be resolved than by inspection of their several laws and charters. Or, in case their charters were the same, that corporation would be the best which did rightliest use, practise, or enjoy the benefits or privileges of the same or like charter, or which did live, as well in public as in private, in best conformity to their laws. Now every visible church is a society or corporation ecclesiastic; and no assembly or multitude of men, how great soever, albeit they privately profess the same faith, can truly be said to

Verbi prædicatio et sacramentorum administratio non tam sunt notæ quibus distingui potest orthodoxa ecclesia ab hæretica, quam formalis ratio seu differentia constitutiva ecclesiæ visibilis.

make one visible society or corporation ecclesiastic, unless they have their public meetings to hear the word of God preached or read unto them, unless at such meetings they join together in public prayer and administration of the sacraments. Whence if the question be, 'Of all such assemblies, corporations, or societies ecclesiastic, as join together in hearing the word preached, in common prayers, in administration of the sacraments, that is, of all visible churches, which is the true church of God?' there can be no other possible satisfactory answer than this, 'That is the true church of God, or orthodoxal visible church, whose doctrine, prayers, and manner of administering sacraments is most conformable and agreeable to the fundamental charter, which charter is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament.' So that all other points, all marks and notes, how many soever our adversaries make, must be examined and tried by this rule. Amongst other marks of the church, they make the gift of miracles to be one.

35. Concerning miracles I have not much to say, being loath to put my sickle into another man's harvest, from whom I hope you shall reap full satisfaction. Only this caveat I would commend unto you, which heretofore I have published, that although it be granted that the devil by his own power can work no true miracle, that is, nothing that shall be above the force or power of nature, or contrary to it; or it being granted likewise, that God doth never lend the use of
498 his omnipotent power unto Satan, his angels or ministers, to work any true miracle, thereby to try the faith of Christians; yet all this being granted in general, if we descend unto particular wonders, we must have as great skill in the force and power of nature, how far it may extend, as Satan hath; we must be as cunning

in discovering his sleights, jugglings, or delusions, as he is in his juggling or deluding, before we can be secure that he cannot put one of the two juggling tricks upon us: as, first, that he cannot make us believe those wonders which we see effected to exceed the force or power of natural causes, whenas in truth and in deed they do not; or that he cannot make us believe that such wonders or miracles as indeed exceed the force of nature to be wrought by him or his instruments, whenas they are wrought by God himself, for some other special end or purpose, or for some other use, than he or his instruments could refer them unto. The hailstones mentioned, Joshua x. 11. were, as well for their magnitude, as for the manner of their falling upon the five kings of the Amorites, truly miraculous, and sure ratifications of Joshua's and his followers' belief; yet whether Satan, permitted by God, *applicare activa passivis*, to make choice of his own agents or instruments, be not able so far to improve the strength of natural causes, or so combine them, that they should produce as great hailstones as those were, is more than any sober philosopher will take upon him to define. However, the production of the like or greater tempest than this was, is not enough to persuade this or that point of controversed doctrine. For suppose some poor Amoritish widow, pitifully oppressed by one or more of these five tyrants, had out of the bitterness of her soul about this time presented her complaints to Nemesis at Rhamnus, a place wherein the power of this revengeful lady was, in the conceit of the heathen, usually manifested, in as remarkable and peculiar sort as the virtue of our Lady (in the opinion of the Romish catholics) is at Hall or Loretto, in respect of other places; imagine again those hailstones had fallen upon the five kings upon the poor widow's

return into Canaan from Rhamnus, how easily might the suppliant have been persuaded by Satan that this great miracle had been effected for her sake, and by the power of the imaginary goddess Nemesis, whom she served! It was not then this miraculous storm, but the consonancy of its miraculous effect unto God's promise or prediction made to Joshua, (to wit, the manifest execution of that God's sentence whom Joshua worshipped, maugre all the gods whose aid these kings of the Amorites had supplicated against Israel,) which was to confirm the faith of the Israelites unto God's promises. For *the Lord had said unto Joshua*, (when the Gibeonites supplicated his assistance against the kings of the Amorites that dwelt in the mountains,) *Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee.* Joshua, upon this request of the Gibeonites, warranted by God, *came unto them suddenly, and went up to Gilgal all night.* And as the Lord had promised, so it came to pass: *for the Lord discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them unto Azekah, and unto Makkedah. And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.* Joshua x. 8—11.

499 36. For conclusion, the greatest wonderment or miracle that in this age can be wrought must be tried by this only touchstone of faith, God's written word, whether it proceed from God and his messengers, or from Satan and his instruments. Now seeing

the scriptures, or rule of faith, hath manifested unto us wherein the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan or Antichrist do consist, the point whereon every miracle or wonderment must be examined is this, whether it tend to the establishment of the kingdom of God or of Christ in our souls, or to the erection or propagation of the kingdom of Antichrist through this world.

Suppose some man or woman amongst us were really possessed of a whole legion of devils, and that some Turkish, Jewish, Muscovitish, Greek, or Romish priest, should take upon him by exorcism to make all the devils go out of the party's body possessed, one after another, in as visible and conspicuous manner as he could drive bees out of their hive through a quill or pen, and cause every one of them to tell you his name, or what place he holds in hell; yet the true use of such miracle or wonderment could be no other than to resolve you, that there may be a real possession of some bodies in this age, and a real dispossession of these devils which had taken possession of it. But if the party which had thus really dispossessed them should upon this wonderment exhort or require you to believe, that that visible church whereof he is a priest or member is the only true church of God, whose proposals or doctrines you are absolutely bound to believe, without further examination or trial of them by the written word of God, *the rule of faith*, this were a true and infallible argument, that the wonder was wrought by the power and sleight of Satan, not by the virtue and power of God, or of Christ's true messengers. For if we duly consider what advantage or possession Satan might by this means gain over our souls; if any devil in hell would be so proud, so obstinate, or wilful, as to refuse to

obey any priest, Jew, or Turk, that would adjure him to depart upon these conditions out of any man's body which he did possess, reason and common sense might instruct us that Beelzebub, the prince of devils, and his assistants, would use all the power they could to vex or torment such a wilful devil as an *apostata*, a rebel, or traitor, that would not advance their kingdom when he might. Wherefore if any priest or other shall at any time tempt you to admit of the infallibility of the Romish church, or to believe in all points as that church believeth, only upon fame or sight of such a wonder wrought by one of her children, ye stand bound in conscience, and upon the allegiance which you owe to Christ, to crave respite until you can inform your consciences whether the acknowledgment of such absolute infallibility, as the modern priests and Jesuits ascribe unto the modern Romish church, or the submission of your belief unto all her doctrines, (especially to this,) be not a flat apostasy from Christ unto Satan, and a true acknowledgment of his sovereignty made unto the church of Rome, as to his proxy or deputy for this purpose. Again, if any priest should work such a wonder as hath been mentioned by such exorcism as they use, as by applying the consecrated host (as they call it), their crucifixes or holy water unto the party affected, or by examining the devils by oath upon the sacrament, you are bound in conscience likewise to crave respite, to be resolved whether these or the like solemnities or ceremonies as
500 they have used of late in this land be not magical sacrifices, true and proper feats of witchery and sorcery. These are points wherein no exorcist, no Romish priest or Jesuit, this day living in this land, can give any ingenious understanding man any tolerable satisfaction. The former point, concerning the infallibility of the

Romish church, is elsewhere handled at large, and I shall be willing to acknowledge myself a thankful debtor unto any priest or Jesuit, or other wellwiller of the present Romish church, that shall give me occasion or ground of reason to think better of their religion in this point, than hitherto I have thought, or can persuade myself to think; and better than flat apostasy from Christ I never thought it, since I was able to read the Trent Council, Bellarmine, Valentian, or other defendants of the pope's absolute and plenary power. My soul shall bless him, whether protestant or papist, that shall convince my understanding there can be any more pestiferous foundation laid for the erection of Antichrist's kingdom, than the Jesuits and canonists have laid, by making the present pope the virtual church, or the visible church of Rome the sole catholic church, unto which God in his word hath promised the infallible assistance of his Spirit. As for the latter point, that their exorcisms are but inchantments or feats of sorcery, it hath been laid unto their charge by some of good place and greater worth in the church of England, who are able enough to prove their allegations, so their adversaries would be willing to make their defence, or submit themselves to any lawful trial.

501 *The second branch of the second member proposed in the former Treatise, parag.* 24; *containing an explication of the particular prophecies on which John Baptist's Faith was grounded, as also of the signs of the time by which it was confirmed, before he sent his message unto our Saviour.*

Of the prenotions which John or the Pharisees had concerning the time or manner of Christ's coming or manifestation: and of the interrogatories propounded to John by the priests and Levites.

37. AMONGST other things before delivered, this was one, which I must request you to call to mind, that there may be a true prenotion or steadfast belief of some promise or prediction concerning Christ, and yet the parties which do no ways distrust the indefinite truth or fulfilling of such predictions or prefigurations, might ofttimes err in the application of them to some party, or in some other circumstance, until the event itself did teach them rightly how to apply. Every error presupposeth some branch of ignorance, but ignorance doth not always include error. Whence it will follow, that if the best of God's saints might err in particulars concerning themselves, as Abraham did, there is no question but they and others might be ignorant of many particulars which became manifest to posterity. Thus the Pharisees, or the priests and Levites, which were sent from Jerusalem to question John Baptist, had a true prenotion or belief in general, that God in latter ages would raise up an extraordinary prophet like unto Moses. But whether this extraordinary prophet should be the Christ or Messias himself, or rather his forerunner, his attendant or companion, they were ignorant. They had again a true prenotion or belief in general, that God would send a solemn messenger to prepare the ways of the

Lord or the Messias whom they did seek: but whether this messenger should be Elias the prophet, the same individual person which was taken up in a fiery chariot into heaven, or some other in power and efficacy of spirit, in zeal to God's true worship and religion like unto him, they were ignorant. And to have been merely ignorant had been no fault, or at least no dangerous fault: but this their ignorance declined to error and stiff presumption, that this messenger, foretold Malachi iii. 1, should be Elias the Tishbite himself. They had a true prenotion or belief in general, that the Messias's coming into the world, or manifestation to it, should be solemnized with some extraordinary rite or ceremony to be performed by water, as by washing or baptizing: but whether this solemnity of *baptizing*, or washing, should be performed by the Messias himself, or by Elias, whom they looked should be his messenger, or by the prophet like to Moses, (who, as they expected, should be a person distinct from Christ;) in all these points they were ignorant, at least doubtful. Howbeit their prenotion of this indefinite or general truth did most incline unto the first point, to wit, that this solemnity of baptizing should be performed by the Christ or Messias himself. Thus much may probably be gathered from John's emphatical denial that he was the Christ or 502
Messias: *This is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.* John i. 19, 20. Thus much he confessed voluntarily, as may be gathered from St. Luke: *And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you*

with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Luke iii. 15, 16. This voluntary acknowledgment of his was in effect to deny that he was the Christ: but what he here intimates by way of denial, or prevention of the people that doubted whether he were the Christ or no, he plainly expresseth, being solemnly and formally asked the same question by the priests and Levites, which the people tacitly made, *I am not the Christ*[a]. Now his answer to this first interrogatory being so full and plain, they frame a second: *What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not.* And not satisfied with this answer, they press him with a third: *Art thou the prophet? And he answered, No.* And he had good reason to answer negatively to this third interrogatory, because he had answered negatively to the first: for that prophet which Moses foretold the Lord would raise up like unto himself, was to be the Christ, the promised Messias, and no other.

38. Of the exact proportion and similitude betwixt Moses and Christ you may read elsewhere[b], or hear more at large hereafter, as occasion shall require. His answer to the second interrogatory being negative, might well administer matter of new quarrel or dispute unto the captious of those times, and some occasion of scruple unto the curious amongst us, for he seems to deny that which our Saviour in this very chapter[c] avoucheth of him: *But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy*

[a] John i. 20.

[b] In the third book upon the Creed, sect. 3. cap. 11. parag. 7.

[c] Matt. xi. 9, 10.

face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. And again, vv. 13, 14: *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias*[d], *which was for to come.* And again, Mark ix. 11—13: *When the apostles asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?* (to wit, before the consummation of the hopes of Israel, or their redemption by the Messias;) *He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias indeed is come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.* This he spake of John Baptist, after he was beheaded. And what reason had John to deny he was Elias, when he was asked this question, seeing our Saviour, after his denial, hath twice affirmed it? *Non male respondit, male enim prior ille rogavit.* The foreman or speaker of the priests and Levites did propound this question amiss, and in such a sense as John could not answer affirmatively to it. For the meaning of the interrogatory was, whether he were that very Elias the Tishbite which was taken up into heaven in the fiery chariot; and John knew himself not to be this Elias, nor did our Saviour ever affirm that he was this Elias.

39. But some men haply will reply, that albeit they were mistaken in this particular, to which John did well to give a negative answer, yet John, having so 503
fair an occasion to rectify the error of the priests and Levites, might have done better if he had more fully expressed himself, and answered with a distinction that he was not Elias the Tishbite, but yet that Elias which the prophet Malachi had foretold the Lord

[d] Malachi iv. 5.

would send, chap. iv. For John could not, in all probability, be ignorant of the prophet Malachi's meaning, seeing the angel Gabriel had expressly expounded it to his father Zacharias, Luke i. 17: *He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.* But this perhaps was more than John had occasion to call to mind. He might be ignorant, without offence, whether Elias himself was not to come after him. For even the best of God's saints and prophets (as was observed before) knew no more of God's will concerning things to come, than it was his will and pleasure to impart unto them. Each of them knew his cue, the signs of the time when he was to begin, and when to end; each had the part which God had appointed him to utter or act perfectly by heart; each knew the tenor of his own commission; but none, or few of them, did so well understand another's commission until they had seen it sped, or the meaning of it unfolded by the event. Now, although the words of Malachi were literally meant of John Baptist, yet were they a kind of riddle until our Saviour did unfold them. And it seemeth by the phrase which our Saviour useth, Matthew xi. 14, that their true meaning was a mystery, which he himself or John only knew, and was to be revealed only to such as were already true disciples. For the word *receive* is τεχνικὸν, a term of art amongst the Hebrews, and imports some such mystery as the Jews imagine to be contained in their cabalistical art. The like force hath the same word in that of the apostle, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all reception*, or *cabalism*[e]. Not that he approves that

[e] 1 Tim. i. 15.

art, at least as since that time it hath been used, but rather that this was a mystery of greater worth and consequence than all the mysteries which the cabalists can imagine to be in their art contained. The manner or importance of the apostle's speech is muchwhat like to that answer of his in the poet[f], who, when they sought to terrify him from fight by the ill-aboding or sinister flying of birds, made answer,

Εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης.

"It was the best augurium, or soothsaying, for a man to fight for his country."

40. Finally, although Malachi did prophesy of John Baptist's coming before Christ *in the power and spirit of Elias,* yet John Baptist did not receive his instructions from this prophet, nor had he his commission for being Christ's forerunner, or his warrant for baptizing from Malachi, but from the prophet Isaiah. And therefore, when the priests and the Levites pressed him further, saying, *Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.* This was the peremptory answer which he meant to stand unto; this and other passages of the same prophet being joined with the internal testimony of the Spirit, which did interpret their true meaning unto him, was his warrant for doing what he did; for baptizing or for preparing the 504
way of the Lord which was to come; but whether the Lord would send Elias or some other greater messenger than himself, was more than he durst take upon him to resolve the priests and Levites in, (specially seeing they were of the sect of the Pharisees,)

[f] Homer, Iliad, μ. 243.

and more perhaps than he in his religious modesty or sobriety did question or inquire after. But when the same priests and Levites did by way of demand or interrogation seem to upbraid him with arrogancy, in taking more upon him than was befitting him, unless he were either the Christ, or Elias, or the prophet like to Moses; to some of which so great a work as the administration of baptism did solely belong; he modestly answers, (*distinguendo,*) *I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.* John i. 26, 27. In which words the evangelist St. John doth intimate as much as is expressed by the evangelist St. Matthew, to wit, that Christ should baptize them after another manner than John did, that is, *with the Holy Ghost and with fire,* chap. iii. 11. I will not trouble you, but rather request you not to trouble yourselves, with that needless question, (and for the most part as ill stated by such as have most meddled with it, as it is needless,) How John's baptism did differ from Christ's baptism, or, Whether they were two baptisms altogether distinct.

41. Thus much you may evidently conceive out of what hath been now delivered. First, that the priests and Levites (at least the sect of the Pharisees, of which sect the priests and Levites which questioned John concerning his baptism, were) did not err in their prenotion or belief in general, that the Messias's coming or manifestation to the world should be solemnized by baptism; nor did they fail in their conjecture, that the Christ or Messias himself was to baptize; but with what baptism he was to baptize, they were ignorant. Secondly, you may perceive, that John Baptist had not only a prenotion, but a distinct belief

or knowledge in particular, that as he himself did baptize with water, so the Christ or Messias, whose forerunner he was, should baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The only useful or pertinent questions which remain to be resolved or discussed, are but two. The first,

(1.) Whether the priests and Levites, or the Pharisees, had their prenotions or belief in general, that the Messias's first manifestation to the world should be solemnized by baptism, from unwritten traditions of the ancients only, or whether it were grounded upon the express testimony of scripture, or the written word of God. The second,

(2.) Whether John Baptist's firm belief of Christ's baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and his own baptizing with water, were grounded only upon the internal revelations made to him in private by him that sent him to baptize with water; or whether they were grounded likewise upon express testimonies of the written word, interpreted and made known unto him by the same Spirit by which the word was written.

To both these questions the answer must be affirmative; as well the one's prenotion as the other's distinct belief were both grounded upon the express testimonies of the written word. The only search or inquiry then to be made is, upon what express testimony the one or other was grounded, and how our belief may be grounded upon the same testimonies.

42. I must request you to remember, that God in 505
the Old Testament did foreshew things to come two ways; either by express testimony or prediction, or by matter of fact or real representation. One and the same future event is ofttimes declared or foresignified both ways. Now predictions merely prophetical are of two sorts: sometimes the prophets foretell things to

Two sorts or branches of the literal sense.

come in proper and literal terms, so as every man at the first hearing may understand their meaning; as the prophet spake to Ahab, 1 Kings xx. 42: *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people.* Sometimes they foretell future events of greater consequence as truly and as certainly, but by way of parable, emblem, or allegory. Now this kind of prediction, and the types or figures of the law, or real events, have the same proportion as poetry and painting. It was wittily said, *Poema est pictura loquens, et pictura est poema silens;* "Every poem is a kind of speaking picture, and every artificial picture a kind of mute and silent poem." And so likewise every type or ceremony of the law, every historical event portending mysteries evangelical [g], is a tacit and silent prophecy; and every prophetical parable was a kind of speaking type or picture of the like events. The events foretold or represented by God's prophets are always real and substantial, more than moral, more than natural; mysteries truly celestial and supernatural. Howbeit, the representation of such events or mysteries is oft-times merely literal or verbal, but conceived in such terms as suppose a feigned metamorphosis in the works of nature to make the picture more fresh and lively. And this kind of prophetical expression of things to come we call the emblematical sense, or literal allegory: so that although every poet be not a prophet, yet every prophet of the Lord was a true poet; not in feigning events which never were, nor never should be, but in framing pictures of future events in themselves contingent, as exact and fresh as any

[h] Hence saith our Saviour, Matt. xi. 13, that the *law* as well as the *prophets, prophesied until John.*

painter can make of the man whom he seeth with his eyes, or whose picture hath been drawn to his hand. Now if a painter could make exact pictures of children which shall not be brought forth till the next year following, we would say he wrought by inspiration of his Spirit, *in whose books all their members are written*, or that his pencil was guided by his hand who found out the birth of man.

Most of Isaiah's prophecies concerning John's baptism, or our Saviour's manifestation were emblematical.

43. The prophecies in special concerning the manifestation of the Messias, and John's office or attendance, are for the most part conceived in terms not proper, but parabolical or emblematical, that is, consisting of literal or verbal allegories. Howbeit some of these prophecies, perhaps some passages in all of them, point out future events in literal, proper, and historical terms. And of events thus literally and punctually foreshewed, some came not to pass until the Messias was revealed; others were historically verified long before, yet so as the events which then happened were by God's institution true types or shadows of mysteries revealed in the gospel, or to be revealed during the time of grace. So that one and the same prophecy is sometimes, or in respect of some part of its total object, fulfilled according to the plain literal sense; sometimes, or in respect of other parts of its object, it is fulfilled according to the literal allegory; sometimes, or in some respect, it is fulfilled according to the mystical sense or real allegory. Amongst other sacred passages, which, by the confession of the ancient and 506
modern malignant Jew, have special reference to the days of their Messias's revelation, these following are more remarkable: Isaiah, chap. xxxv. and xl. of which hereafter: and again; *I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry*

land springs of water. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together: that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it. Isaiah xli. 18—20. *Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people* (the seed of Abraham according to promise) *have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel*—that is, the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, or such as gloried in their carnal prerogatives of their birth or progeny. Isaiah xliii. 18—22. *Go ye forth of Babylon: flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing: declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth; say ye, The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob.* [h]*And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts: he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for them: he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out.* Isaiah xlviii. 20, 21. *For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the*

[h] The prophet emphatically implies that the miracle which God had wrought for his people in the wilderness after their deliverance out of Egypt, should be reiterated or eminently accomplished upon their return from Chaldea. He foresaw, as Jeremiah did, that this second deliverance should be more glorious than the former. Vide Jer. xxiii. 27.

mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. Isaiah lv. 12, 13.

44. From these and the like particulars in this prophet we may observe this general:—that in all or most places wherein the manifestation of the Messias or propagation of his kingdom is mentioned, there is still foretold some strange miracle or wonder to be wrought in the desert, and in particular the bursting out of waters. The question is, in what sense these and like places have been fulfilled, or whether the predictions were plainly literal, or rather by way of parable or allegory. Whatsoever may be said or thought of some of these predictions, certain it is that others of them were never verified or fulfilled according to the literal, plain, or natural sense of the words, either before or about our Saviour's manifestation in the wilderness. That is as much as to say, the mysteries here truly foretold upon John's baptism were not foreshadowed or prefigured by matter of deed or fact, or by any such real representation as these words properly imply, or by any natural or visible alteration of the soil or trees in the wilderness; only the manner of the prophecy or prediction is emblematical or allegorical; that is, the mysteries here foretold were such in respect of men's souls, bodies, or affections, as these alterations in the soil or trees of the wilderness (if they had literally fallen out) might have been true shadows or pictures of them. To begin with that 507
place whence John's commission took his beginning, Isaiah xl. 3, 4: *The voice of him that crieth in the*

wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. We are not hence to believe, as some latter Jews foolishly dream, that all the hills in the wilderness, or place where the Messias was to be manifested, were to be levelled with the valleys or lower ground; or that all the highways for men to come unto him should be made as plain and smooth as a bowling-alley or garden-walk. The intent or purport of the prophet was, that this crier in the wilderness was so to prepare the hearts, the affections, and dispositions of men's minds, that they should not be offended in Christ or the Messias, when he should be revealed; that they should remove all stumblingblocks of pride, arrogancy, covetousness, perverseness, hypocrisy, or the like, which did hinder them from coming unto him with all their souls and all their hearts. So when it is said, the Lord would turn the thorn into the fir tree, or the brier into the myrtle tree in the wilderness, we must not imagine such a real or corporeal transmutation upon our Saviour's approach; for if this metamorphosis had been made, John should not have been a crier in the wilderness, but in the garden. What then do the words, according to the prophet's natural meaning and intention, import? As true, as real, and strange an alteration in men's souls and affections, which thus hearkened to the crier's voice, as the supposed change of the thorn into the fir tree, or the brier into the myrtle tree, or the change of the wilderness itself into a garden, (if that had been really and miraculously wrought,) could have forepictured or foreshadowed. The metaphor or allegory is no other

than that of the same prophet, Isaiah v. 7: *The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.* That this is the intent and meaning of Isaiah's poetical manner of prediction or figurative kind of speech in the forecited places, may be gathered from John Baptist himself, whose interpretation of them in this place is literal, though his speech be metaphorical, and suitable to the former allegory: for the tenor of his proclamation or crying in the wilderness was, *Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.* Now repentance, according to the strict and proper sense of the original, imports a mutation of the mind: and John, in the very next words, expresseth wherein this change of mind whereto he exhorts them doth consist; *Bring forth fruits worthy repentance,* Matt. iii. 8. This he spake unto the Pharisees and Sadducees, when they came unto his baptism, whom he termeth a *generation of vipers,* more barren unto all good works or fruits of the Spirit, than the thorns in the wilderness, or the brambles in the desert; and yet as proud that they were Abraham's sons as the bramble in the parable of Jotham, (Judges ix. 15.) which sought to be anointed king over the trees of the forest. All of them expected to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven, which they rightly believed should be established in the days of the Messias, or Christ: howbeit they thought the chief glory of this kingdom should consist in their tyrannizing or domineering over the Gentiles like lords and kings. For quelling this humour, and working that change of mind wherein 508 true repentance consists, John admonisheth them: *Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father:* (this proud conceit was a moun-

The prophet in the fourth verse had allegorically pictured *oppression* by the wild grape, and *righteousness* by the useful fruit of the true vine.

tain which was to be removed ere they could come to Christ:) *for I say unto you, that God is able out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.* Matt. iii. 9. This last clause, in its literal and proper sense, imports a more miraculous change than the turning of the bramble into the myrtle, or the thorn into the fir tree, than the exalting of valleys into mountains; and yet, rather than God's promise should not have been accomplished, this speech of John must have been fulfilled in its strict and proper sense. However, literally fulfilled it was, in the adoption of publicans and sinners (of whom it was meant by John) to be *Abraham's seed, and heirs of promise.* But the Baptist continueth his former allegory or parabolical speech, according to the prophet Isaiah's intent and meaning: *Now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,* ver. 10. None are excepted, no not the offspring of Abraham; for unless, upon the baptism of water which John administered, they become fruitful like the vine or olive, they must be accounted amongst the thorns and brambles, and be sentenced unto the fire.

The literal allegory, or emblematical importance of waters bursting out in the wilderness, so often mentioned by the prophets.

45. But what shall we say of the waters bursting forth in the wilderness, so often mentioned by the prophet Isaiah? Were these predictions as merely figurative as the former, and not at all fulfilled according to the literal, plain, historical sense? It is probable that they were thus fulfilled, and that God had shewn some wonders in the wilderness, in causing springs of water to burst forth in dry and barren places, between Isaiah's and John Baptist's days; perhaps before the cviith Psalm was penned, which for the plain literal sense accords with the prophet Isaiah's words—*He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and*

dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that he may prepare a city for habitation. Psalm cvii. 35, 36. Yet because this is but probable or conjectural, we will make it no ground of our intended inference. Supposing then that these predictions were as merely figurative or metaphorical as the former, they might notwithstanding truly and prophetically prefigure, or by way of emblem foreshadow, as well the internal comfort of the Spirit wherewith Christ baptizeth us, as the external baptism of water which John administered. The water, you know, hath two natural properties, from which many metaphors (usual in sacred writers) are borrowed; by which the true intent and meaning of the prophet Isaiah's figurative or emblematical expressions of the waters in the wilderness is to be valued. The first natural property of water (specially in hotter countries, where thirst is more vehement, and waters more pleasant) is to refresh or comfort the weary soul: the second, to be the nurse or mother of fruitfulness, as well in the trees or grass of the field, as in plants, herbs, or flowers of the garden. According to this latter property, the prophet's prediction of springs bursting out in the wilderness was a true poetical emblem or shadow of John's baptizing with water, who was to be by his office as the gardener, to water and cherish those fruitful trees and plants of righteousness, with which God had promised to adorn the wilderness. For even the publicans and sinners, *aliens* by nature *from the commonwealth of Israel*, being made partakers of the baptism of John, were engrafted 509
into Abraham's stock, made fruitful branches of that vine which God had planted in Jewry, and heirs of that heavenly kingdom which John did preach, whilst Abraham's seed according to the flesh were disin-

herited: *All the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John: but the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.* Luke vii. 29, 30. vide Matt. viii. 11, 12. According to the first natural property of water, which is to refresh the weary, or such as are ready to faint for thirst, the same predictions of *springs or waters bursting forth in the wilderness* did prefigure the internal comfort of the Spirit, wherewith Christ alone baptizeth us. For though John did plant and water those *plants of righteousness*, yet was it Christ alone that gave the increase. And this internal baptism was really foreshadowed, not only by figurative or prophetical manner of speech, but by historical and real matter of fact: and so likewise was the external baptism by water literally foretold by the prophet Isaiah, that it should be a type or sign of Christ's baptism with the Spirit. This internal baptism (to omit other instances) was really foreshadowed by the waters which issued out of the rock in the wilderness, when the people murmured against Moses and Aaron, as if they had brought them forth out of Egypt to have killed them with thirst in the desert. Now this we take as granted, that every miracle which God wrought in the Old Testament was a true shadow or picture of some great mystery to be fulfilled in the New Testament, or after the manifestation of Christ. In this the Jews agree with us; only they expect that the miracles which their Messias should work should be more glorious to the eye of sense than those which Moses wrought: but we say they are not only greater, but of another kind; otherwise they should not be true miraculous mysteries, but mere miracles. Now that the waters issuing out of the

rock were a type or shadow of this mystical baptism of the Spirit we have the testimonies of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xlviii. 28, before cited, and of the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 1—4: *Brethren, I would not that you should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* How was it Christ? Not literally, not identically. Christ, according to the Godhead, was not so present in, or so united to the rock, as he is now to our flesh; yet was it Christ, the second Person in Trinity, the Son of God, which made the water (wherewith the Israelites, his people, were comforted and refreshed in the extremity of their bodily thirst) to issue out of the rock when Moses smote it. The mystery portended or foreshadowed by this miracle herein consists; that the same Son of God (who was truly God) which gave them plenty of water out of the rock, should afterwards become the rock of our salvation, the fountain of life unto the thirsty and weary soul. This internal baptism, which was thus really foreshadowed by the waters in the rock, was literally foretold, Psalm xxxvi. 8, 9: *They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*

46. Amongst other senses in which the scriptures of the Old Testament are said to be fulfilled in the New, 510
one, and that an especial one, (as is elsewhere observed,) is when such speeches as are by the prophets (most of all by the psalmist) indefinitely uttered of God, but

A peculiar sense in which prophecies, the Psalms

especially, are more frequently fulfilled than observed to be fulfilled by most interpreters.

cannot be attributed to the Divine nature otherwise than ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, (that is, by manner of speech borrowed from the customs or fashions of men,) do imprint their strict and proper character upon *God made man*, and fit his actions as the seal doth the print in wax. The Divine nature is life itself, an ocean of living waters, which we cannot approach: but the divine nature in Christ is as a fountain or well of life, from which every thirsty soul may draw the water of life without stint, without any danger of drowning himself, or drawing it dry: for it is more calm and placid than any fountain or spring, though more inexhaustible than the sea. According to this sense is that other place of the psalmist fulfilled in Christ, that is, in God made man; *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.* Psalm cxlvi. 10. That the God of Zion, as God, should reign for ever, was no new thing, no matter of wonder, or worth notice-taking to any inhabitant of Jerusalem or man of Judah. All of them (from the least unto the greatest) knew well that he which had made the world had no beginning, no end of days or sovereignty: but that this God of Zion, who was Lord likewise of heaven and earth, should be as visibly enthronized in Zion as David had been, and that he should begin to erect a kingdom which was never to have an end; this was a wonder worthy to be taken notice of by all the world. Now that this God of Zion, by whose protection Moses had led Israel out of Egypt, under whose conduct Joshua brought them into the land of promise; that he who had anointed David king should himself be anointed King over Zion, was the true and literal meaning of the psalmist in this and the like places: of which hereafter. Of this rank is that prophecy of Isaiah, chap.

xl. 5, with which John Baptist was well acquainted, for he had his commission from it; *The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* Such an open, distinct, and full sight as these words literally import, supposeth an object truly visible, and within ken of ordinary and common sight. God in his glory is altogether invisible to flesh and blood; and though he had taken visible shape upon him in the heavens, yet so he had still remained invisible to men that have their habitation here on earth. That unto them he might become visible, and that they might see his glory together—so see it, as they were seen of it; that he might see them, and they see him with the eyes of flesh, he took up our flesh for his tabernacle, and walked and talked amongst us in more visible and audible manner than he did in the camp of Israel, than he did with Moses in the tabernacle of the congregation. This which Isaiah here speaketh from the mouth of the Lord, the Lord himself did after utter with his own mouth, and yet with the mouth of man; to wit, that *he which had seen him had seen his Father;* because the glory of God was manifested in him. And when the prophet saith, that *the glory of the Lord should be revealed, and that all flesh shall see it together,* it is in this speech included that this glory of God should be revealed or manifested *in the flesh.* The best interpretation of the prophet's words that I can commend unto you must be from St. John, chap. i. 1. 14: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh, and* 511
dwelt amongst us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. This blessed apostle might perhaps say of

himself and some few others in a peculiar sort, *We saw his glory*, and the glory which we saw was as the *only begotten Son of God:* for he with Peter and James had seen him transfigured on the mount. But all that saw *the man Christ Jesus* at his baptism with their bodily eyes, did so see the glory of God revealed from heaven. And he was so seen of all flesh: some of all sorts, though not all of every sort, did see him baptized, and heard him declared from heaven to be the Son of God: some then present were Pharisees, others Sadducees; some Jews, others Gentiles; some publicans, some priests and Levites, some Samaritans, other Galilæans. Not at that time only, (though the prophet's words be especially meant of that time,) but ever after, all flesh might have seen the lively characters of those glorious attributes of salvation, which the prophets and psalmist had appropriated to the God of Zion, to make distinct and real impression in the man Christ Jesus. These two attributes of *glory* and *salvation* are of so near alliance, of such equivalent use, that whereas the prophet had said, *All flesh should see the glory of God*, St. Luke expressing his meaning, saith, *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*, chap. iii. 6. He supposeth, as the prophet meant, that the glory of God should be manifested in the salvation of men. This *glory* or *salvation of God* was then revealed, and became visible to flesh and blood, when God became man, and took his general attribute of *salvation* as his proper name, being called *Jesus*. Finally, that *salvation* of God which Simeon saw with such delight at our Saviour's circumcision, all flesh did or might have seen at his baptism.

47. But to return unto the testimony of the psalmist—*With thee is the fountain of life*, which containeth

the mystical signification of the waters which miraculously issued out of the rock. The best interpretation of both places is delivered by St. John, by way of comment upon our Saviour's words, John vii. 38, 39: *He that believeth on me, (as the scripture hath said,) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* This intersertion or parenthesis, *as the scripture hath said,* stands like the tongue in a balance, doubtful to whether part of the sentence wherein it is contained it inclineth. Some interpreters would draw it to the first part; *He that believeth in me, as saith the scripture*—that is, in such wise, such sort and measure as the scripture requireth—*out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* Others would draw it to the latter part, and render it thus; *He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, as the scriptures have foretold.* Though both interpretations may be true, though both may stand with the general analogy of faith, yet the latter, in my opinion, is more pertinent, and more consonant to the true intention of this place. But then it will be questioned, What scripture hath said that which our Saviour here doth; to wit, that rivers of living water should flow from such as believed in him? The very express words are nowhere else to be found in scripture, for they are (as most of our Saviour's are when he speaks of greatest mysteries) parabolical. Their importance, or real sense, is expressed by St. John in the same place; *This he spake of the Spirit,* &c. Now if by the *rivers of living water* our Saviour meant (as St. John telleth us he did) this plentiful effusion of his Spirit, the same scriptures which fore- 512
tell the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, whether in terms plainly literal or emblematical, foretell likewise the rivers of living water which were to flow from

true believers. The manner of our Saviour's expression of the Spirit's effusion by *rivers flowing out*, implieth it should be poured out in such a plentiful measure, as would be not only sufficient to satiate the souls of them that thirsted after it, but in a measure overflowing to the salvation of others. And such were these admirable gifts of the Holy Ghost, which after our Saviour's ascension were bestowed upon his apostles and disciples. The scriptures which particularly foretell this plentiful effusion of the Spirit are many: these following are, if not the principal, yet the most apposite to our present argument: Joel ii. 28. 29. 32: *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon your servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.* And again, Isaiah xliv. 3, 4: *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground*[i]: *I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses.* The first words of this later prophecy were literally and historically fulfilled in the baptism of John; the latter

[i] *The dry ground*, in this place, *supponit pro homine*, (as some logicians speak,) and is to be understood of men so affected as David was, when he uttered that song in the wilderness of Judæa, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.* Psalm lxiii. 1. Compare this testimony with the former testimony, Psalm xxxvi. parag. 45.

part of it is, as it were, an evangelical explication of the mystical sense of the former words. And John Baptist might from this place alone easily collect, that although he might pour water upon men's bodies, though he did plunge or wash such as are compared to dry land in the waters, and by this external sacrament engraft them in the stock of Abraham; yet he could not pour out the Spirit of God, or bestow the blessing of increase upon them: this he knew must be the work of him that *sent him*, who had bestowed some portion or measure of the Spirit or blessing here mentioned upon him, as a sure pledge or experiment of the like blessing to be bestowed on others, specially on such as had been partakers of his baptism. From the same place likewise John might easily gather, that the baptism of water, wherewith he himself baptized, was in order of time to go before the baptism of the Spirit, which was mystically prefigured by it, and foretold by our Saviour in the forecited place, John vii. 38, though (as we said before) in a figurative or allegorical sense, which St. John in the next words after, ver. 39, hath expounded unto us: *This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* John's meaning is, *the Spirit was not poured out* in such plentiful measure as this place of Isaiah and that other of the prophet Joel did import: for after our Saviour's glorification, all such as were baptized with water were likewise baptized with the Holy Ghost: most of them, filled with the spirit of prophecy, or gift of tongues, enabled to convey the words and waters of life unto the souls of others. All this was foresignified by the Holy Ghost's descending upon our Saviour at his coming out of the water: for his baptism was a pre-

figuration of his death and resurrection, and by his resurrection he was really declared to be the Son of
513 God, and fulfilled the psalmist's prediction, *Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee*, Psalm ii. 7: which prediction was further ratified, and the meaning of it determined by the voice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The same truth thus often declared, as well by predictions as by matters of fact or real event, was finally testified by the descending of the Holy Ghost upon his apostles and disciples: so that another branch of St. John's meaning, or, if you will, another shoot of the former branch, is, that the Holy Ghost, at the time when our Saviour uttered those words, *He that believeth in me*, &c. did not appear as an authentic witness to ratify his doctrine. His testimony concerning our Saviour was reserved till our Saviour's glorification, after which it was public, frequent, and visible. *Jesus*, saith St. Peter, *whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* Acts v. 30—32. This giving of the Holy Ghost in visible manner was that baptism of Christ which was opposed to the baptism of John; and that the world might know and believe it came immediately from Christ, and not from John, nor from the apostles, or from the sacrament which they administered, it was given to some, and these by condition Gentiles, before they had been partakers of John's baptism, or any Mosaical rite or sacrament. *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word*, Acts x. 44. Whence he concludeth,

ver. 47: *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* St. Peter took more special notice of our Saviour's words from this experiment in Cornelius and his family, than he did from the Holy Ghost descending in cloven tongues upon himself and his fellow-apostles, which had been baptized: *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John did baptize with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.* Acts xi. 15, 16. St. Peter's belief in this point was grounded upon our Saviour's words, and confirmed by this experiment; John Baptist's belief of the same conclusion was grounded upon the prophet Isaiah's predictions. John did foretell the same truth which our Saviour did, before he was acquainted with him or knew him by face[k]; and yet John's knowledge or belief of this mystery was confirmed by a visible sign, by the descending of the Holy Ghost. Concerning which, and the manner how John came to know our Saviour before he baptized him, with the signs of the time that did accompany or ensue upon his baptism, we are in the next place to make inquiry.

48. From the former dialogue between the priests and Levites and John Baptist, concerning his office and ministry of baptism, you may observe that John was careful to prevent two inconveniencies: first, the false opinion which the people had conceived of him, as if he had been the Messias himself; and secondly, to prevent all suspicion of compact or collusion between Jesus of Nazareth (whom he afterward proclaims to be the Messias) and himself. And unto this suspicion both parties had been more liable, if they had been as

[k] Matt. iii. 11.

well acquainted before our Saviour's baptism as afterward they were. Not to speak of our Saviour's knowledge, who knew all things; for John the Baptist, he had a true prenotion or distinct belief of these gene-
514 rals or indefinites: 1. that the time wherein the Messias was to be manifested unto Israel was now approaching; 2. that the Messias was to repair unto the place where he baptized, there to be declared, or manifested unto Israel; 3. that the Messias after his manifestation was to baptize others with the Holy Ghost. These generals he believed and knew from the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, expounded to him by the internal revelation of the Spirit, and the signs of the time immediately preceding. But of these particulars following he was ignorant, until the event, and the signs immediately following, did unfold them: 1. the day and hour wherein the Messias was first to be manifested, when he first begun to baptize, he distinctly knew not; 2. the day and hour of the Messias coming unto him being known, yet he knew not how to distinguish the Messias from other men by face or sight; 3. after he had known and seen him face to face, yet he knew not whether he should baptize him with others or no, but rather presupposed it as a matter unfitting, that the messenger, whose commission only was to baptize with water, should baptize his Lord and Master, whom he knew to be sent of purpose to baptize others with the Holy Ghost. This last point is evident from St. Matthew, chap. iii. 13, 14, 15: *When Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him, John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.*

49. That John Baptist before this time did not know our Saviour by face is evident from St. John, chap. i. 29—32: *The next day* (not the next day after our Saviour's baptism, but the next day after the priests and Levites had questioned John, or the next day after our Saviour's return from the wilderness) *John seeing Jesus coming unto him, saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest unto Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.* And further to prevent all suspicion of compact or collusion betwixt them, or rather to stir up the people to admire with him the sweet disposition of the divine Providence in all this business, he repeateth again what he said before: *And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.* But whilst I am a twisting these two evangelical narrations together, you have perhaps already espied, or may hereafter espy a knot or rivel, wherewith your belief one time or another may be entangled; specially, if the Jew, atheist, or libertine should draw it faster, or a weak interpreter of scriptures have the handling of it. That you may the better know, whensoever occasion shall be offered, how to loose or untwist the knot, give me leave first to cast it; for, as the great philosopher telleth us, no man knoweth rightly how to assoil or resolve a question, unless he

A seeming contradiction betwixt St. Matthew and St. John fully cleared.

first know how to frame it. The right making of any objection (as the same philosopher tells us) is more than half the solution of it. The doubt or knot which ariseth out of the two narrations of the evangelists, St. Matthew and St. John, is framed thus: first, it is
515 evident out of them both, as also out of the other two evangelists, that the Holy Ghost did not descend upon our Saviour until John had baptized him: it is evident again, out of St. John's words forecited, chap. i. 33, that the descending of the Holy Ghost upon our Saviour, and his *resting upon him*, was given by God himself unto John Baptist for a sign, whereby to know or distinguish the Messias, or him that was to *baptize with the Holy Ghost*, from all other men. Now if John knew him by face from all other men before the Spirit did descend and rest upon him, what needed this sign? And if he knew him not by face before the descending of the Holy Ghost, what construction can we make of St. Matthew's words before recited, chap. iii. 13, 14, where he saith, *That when Jesus came to be baptized of him, John replied, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?* For to whom could the Baptist himself in good earnest say, *I have need to be baptized of thee*, save only unto him whom he knew could baptize him *with the Holy Ghost and with fire?* And if John Baptist knew Jesus of Nazareth, at his first coming to him, to be the man which was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, before he had seen the Holy Ghost descending upon him, (as out of St. Matthew it plainly appeareth that he did so know him,) how is it true which St. John saith in the person of John the Baptist, *I knew him not?* that is, in ordinary construction, as if he had said, I had not known him, but by the descending and resting of the Holy Ghost upon him.

50. The seeming contradiction between these two evangelists hath occasioned some of the ancients to conceit, that the Holy Ghost did twice descend upon our Saviour; once before his baptism, (of which descension John only or some few more were spectators, and by this sign in private John did know him, before he came in public to be baptized of him,) and again immediately after his baptism. But a man cannot more strengthen or confirm a weak, crazy, or unsound objection, than by giving it a lame, unsolid, or unsatisfactory answer. The one part of this distinction, consisting merely in imagination, would serve as a foil, to give some tincture or colour of truth unto the objected contradiction, which, if it be well examined and better looked into, consists only in appearance. Jansenius seeks to salve this objected contradiction in this manner. [k]The Baptist in the words forecited saith not, that he did not know our Saviour before the Holy Ghost did point him out by descending upon him, but that he had received a revelation from God concerning the Holy Ghost's descending upon him. The solution is borrowed in part from St. Chrysostom, perhaps sufficient enough to blank a forward disputant, that would undertake to prove a plain contradiction between the Baptist's words, as they are related by St. Matthew, chap. iii. and by St. John. But many speeches which cannot legally be convinced of falsehood are often apparently delusory or impertinent, and

[i] Quanquam secundum probabiliorem Chrysostomi sententiam, ut prius dictum est, Joannes ante columbæ descensum interiori spiritus revelatione Christum venientem ad baptismum suum cognoverit, id tamen non pugnat cum præsenti loco. Nam non dicit hic Joannes sibi ignotum fuisse donec columbæ inditio illum agnoverit, sed tantum hoc signum se divinitus aliquando accepisse quo illum agnosceret, certius utique et sic ut per illud certo ipsum alius manifestare posset. — Cap. 16. fol. 138.

that such revelations or instructions as Maldonate supposeth, were on Samuel's part altogether necessary, because he had no visible sign given him; but in this business of John Baptist altogether superfluous. The exhibition or production of the visible sign, which God had promised him, was the only new revelation which he was to rely upon.

52. I will not trouble you with the variety of
517 opinions or expositions of several commentators, from none of which I have received any full satisfaction myself. All of them have omitted one point, which in every controversy ought in the first place to be inquired after: and it is this; Whether there be not a mean between the opposite or controverted opinions? The opposite opinions in this argument are two: the one, that the Holy Ghost did descend upon our Saviour in John's presence, before he was baptized by John; the other, that John did know our Saviour before his baptism, by some special immediate revelation of the Spirit. Now it is not necessary that John should know him by either of these two ways. There is an apparent mean or middle way betwixt them, by which John might come to such knowledge as he had of our Saviour before the Holy Ghost did in the sight of the people descend upon him; and this mean we may suppose to be the opening or unfolding of some prophetical passage, whose meaning before, John had neither occasion in particular to observe, nor opportunity to discern. Howbeit, this knowledge of scriptures may be called a revelation, but ordinary and mediate, such as the ministers of the gospel may at this day have by the help of commentaries, by collation of scripture with scripture, or of historical events with prophecies precedent; the signs of the time being in all ages the best commentaries, and, as it were, substi-

tutes to the spirit of prophecy or revelation. Now, although the evangelist neither mention any special revelation made unto John, after God had given him a sign whereby to know our Saviour, nor intimate any probable ground for such conjectures; yet they (St. Mark especially) relate such circumstances of our Saviour's coming to John, as might well occasion him to call to mind a peculiar passage concerning Christ's baptism mentioned by the prophet Isaiah, which otherwise perhaps had not been thought of, or whose meaning, although he had thought of it, John could not for the present have understood, without such comments or expositions as the manner of our Saviour's coming to baptism did make upon it. Now the testimonies of the scripture long before written, especially the prophetical testimonies or predictions of things to come, are no way superfluous, either where new revelations (though made by God to following prophets, *viva voce*) or visible signs are given or promised, but rather subordinate and concurrent; that is, (to speak more plainly,) as well all new revelations made by the Spirit, (whether *viva voce*, or otherwise,) as all visible signs or wonders, which God doth promise or work, are to be examined and authorized by his word already written, specially by the predictions of the prophets. And all new revelations, or visible signs or wonders, which have been, are, or shall be, if they proceed from God or the Spirit of truth, are always true commentaries, or expositions of some part or other of the written word, and pledges withal of some greater mystery to come; afterwards to be fulfilled for their good, to whom such revelations or signs are given and made.

53. The historical relation of St. Mark, whose circumstances might lead John, and now may lead us

Of the means or signs by

which John came to know our Saviour in part, before the Holy Ghost did descend upon him.

unto the right meaning of the prophet Isaiah's testimony concerning the descending of the Holy Ghost, is in Mark i. 9: *And it came to pass in those days,* (to wit, in those days wherein all the land of Judæa and they of Jerusalem went out, and were all baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins,) *that Jesus*
518 *came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.* Now ye are to conceive, that as no bishop or inferior minister amongst us doth or may at any time administer baptism, save only to such as he knoweth to be born of Christian parents, whose names and place of dwelling he knoweth; so, neither did John, the first minister of baptism, admit any to the baptism of water, save only such as did profess their names, their condition of life, or place of dwelling: and (our Saviour only excepted) all that were baptized of him did confess their sins. All this is evident from the evangelists, especially from the evangelist St. Luke, chap. iii. For John bestowed a distinct sermon or exhortation upon every distinct sort or profession of men that came to be baptized of him. Unto the Pharisees and Sadducees which came to his baptism amongst other multitudes of people, he said, *O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid to the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* Luke iii. 7, 8, 9. The people hearing their teachers or masters thus sharply checked by John, *asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He*

that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. And as it followeth in the same evangelist, *Then came also publicans to be baptized;* and being taught, as it seems, by the example of the people of Judæa which had been baptized before them, *they said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* And after they had been baptized, *the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* vv. 10—14. Now after all these were baptized, (yet all these being still present with John, *that all flesh,* as the prophet foretold, *might see the glory,* or, as St. Luke saith, the *salvation of God,*) our Saviour came to be baptized of John. And inasmuch as John before this time did neither know him by face or by name, there is no question but he would require both his name, his profession, and place of dwelling, before he would admit him unto baptism, unless our Saviour haply did in both prevent him. However, after John had once heard his name, and the name of the place (town or city) from whence he came, he might easily prognosticate or divine, without any special extraordinary revelation, that amongst all the multitudes of men which resorted unto his baptism, this was the man on whom the Holy Ghost was to descend, according to God's promise, and the prediction of the prophet Isaiah. And upon this prenotion or presumption John might in modesty say unto him, as you heard before, *I had need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to be baptized of me?*

54. But I know you expect to know the place of the prophet Isaiah, wherein the descending of the Holy

Ghost upon our Saviour is foretold, and how the name of Jesus, and of the town or city whence he came, might call this place unto John's mind, or expound the distinct meaning of it, before unknown unto him. The place is, Isaiah xi. 1, 2: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow*
519 *out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding*, &c. This prediction or prophetical testimony is of the same rank or kind that all or most of this prophet's predictions, which concern the mystery of John's baptizing our Saviour, were before observed to be; that is, a prediction not given in literal, plain, grammatical terms, but in terms allegorical or emblematical; such as was Jotham's prediction of Abimelech's and the men of Shechem's ruin by the parable of the trees of the forest; or such as Isaiah's forepicturing the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem by the parable of the vineyard, which was to be laid waste by its lord and owner, because instead of grapes it brought forth wild grapes. The prophet Isaiah, in the latter end of the tenth chapter, and in the words immediately preceding to the late-cited testimony, had said, *Behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror: and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.* vv. 33, 34. By the fall of Lebanon—a forest famous amongst the nations for tall and goodly cedars—he forepictures the extirpation of David's royal race by Solomon and his successors, or the pulling down the mighty from their seats: by cutting down the thickets of the forest with iron, he foreshadows the destruction of this people by the enemy's sword, and the low

estate whereto the house of Judah and David should be brought, before the coming of Shiloh, or of him whom they so long expected. In the latter part of the prophecy (which is the beginning of the eleventh chapter) the prophet fully expounds himself, that the intent or purpose of the prophecy was to instruct the people, that when the offspring of David and hope of Judah should seem in a manner utterly cut off, (as it was to all men's thinking in the days of Herod the Great,) yet then there should spring a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of his root, which should raise the house of David (now ruined) unto greater height than ever it had. By this *rod* or *branch* the prophet understands a man; for he terms him the rod or branch of Jesse, (who was David's father,) but a man that should be better able to rule and feed the people of Israel than David himself, the chief stem of Jesse, or Solomon his son, or any other king of Judah had been. The extraordinary gifts or qualifications which the prophet foretelleth that the Spirit of the Lord, which was to rest upon him, would bestow upon this rod of Jesse, are such as can appertain to none save only to the Messias himself, that is, to the Lord's Anointed, or him that was to be anointed with the Holy Ghost.

55. The greatest offence which the Jews took at our Saviour was, that he came not forth of Beth-lehem the city of David, but from Nazareth, a town in Galilee; that his education was so mean, and his parentage so poor. Now this offence the prophet Isaiah (so they would have understood him) had fully prevented, foretelling that he should grow up as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and as a branch out of his root. This did truly forepicture that he should be of meaner parentage than David himself had been, as being to spring

out of the decayed stem or root of Jesse. Again, the very word in the original, *Netser,* signifying *a rod,* did picture out unto us the very place wherein he was to grow up as a rod, until he came to be declared unto Israel by the Spirit of God descending upon him: for the town of Nazareth hath its very name from the
520 word here used by the prophet Isaiah, *Netser,* and is as much in English, as the town of *Rods* or *Grafts.* Now, albeit John did not know this Rod or Branch of Jesse before he came unto him to be baptized, yet his very name being JESUS, which is *a Saviour,* and the name of the place whence he came Nazareth, *a town of rods,* could not but suggest thus much to John, that seeing the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God, was to descend upon some one that came unto his baptism, and to rest upon him, there was none amongst all the multitudes that came unto him in whom this prediction or sign which God had given him could be so fulfilled as in this Jesus of Nazareth: and thus, certainly expecting that the Spirit of God would descend upon him, he refused, as St. Matthew telleth us, to baptize him, saying, *I have need to be baptized of thee,* &c. Now this very sign, which God gave to John how to know him, was given before by the prophet Isaiah in the place forecited: for in that he is termed a Rod or Branch, on which the Spirit of the Lord should rest, it is imported that the manner of his resting should be as a bird or fowl doth upon a stem or branch. So that all which God in the sign given to John doth add unto the prophecy, is a distinct expression of the bird or fowl, in whose shape or bodily likeness the Spirit was to descend and rest upon him; and that was in the shape or bodily likeness of a dove. So then John before our Saviour's baptism had the testimony of the prophet, that the Spirit of the Lord would descend

and rest upon the man whom he then first knew only by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, that is, of Jesus the Rod or Branch of Jesse. After our Saviour's baptism, he had this testimony or assurance of the prophet, and his own interpretation of it (when our Saviour first came unto him) fully sealed and warranted by the evidence of his bodily senses, by the visible experiment of the Holy Ghost, descending in the likeness of a dove, by the voice which he heard from heaven, ***This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.***

56. That this prophecy of Isaiah hath special reference to the time of our Saviour's baptism, and to the kingdom of heaven which John proclaimed, and into which his baptism by water was as the door or entrance, the very ceremony or solemnity of men's admission unto it does testify: and so do the effects and fruits of the Spirit's descending and resting upon the ***Rod*** or ***Branch*** of ***Jesse***, which fruits and effects are in the same chapter at large described, and are of two sorts. The first sort concerns the Rod or Branch of Jesse himself; and these are set forth in Isaiah xi. 3—5: *The Spirit of the Lord* (saith the prophet) *shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.* All these are heroical endowments or qualifications for government of so great a kingdom, as the prophet foretold this Rod of Jesse or Branch of David was to erect. And of these qualifications here mentioned, the best gifts which the

Lord bestowed on David, on Saul, or Solomon, or upon other kings of Judah, at their anointments or inaugurations, were but shadows or prefigurations. Now the *descending* of the Spirit of God here foretold by the prophet, and resting upon our Saviour, was his anoint-
521 ment and solemn inauguration or designment to his kingdom. Not that he was instantly to enter into his kingdom of glory, or take possession of his heavenly inheritance, but for a time to expect such troubles and persecutions in the attainment of it, as his father David had suffered between the time wherein Samuel had anointed him king in his father Jesse's house at Beth-lehem, and the time wherein he was publicly anointed king, after Saul's death, in Hebron. That our Saviour's anointment or designment to be King and Lord over Israel doth bear date from the time that he was baptized by John in Jordan, St. Peter testifies, Acts x. 37, 38: *That word you know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.* The voice which at his anointment was heard from heaven, did plainly and openly declare him to be that Son of David, of whom alone it was truly fulfilled, which David by his spirit of prophecy had foretold, *That God should be unto him a father, and he should be unto him a son.* And upon this declaration made at his baptism, the devil, unto whom some scattered sound of it haply came, might collect that he was *Dei Filius.* The first memorable act his father David (after Samuel had anointed him) did undertake was his conflict with Goliath; and the first act this Rod of Jesse after his anointment undertaketh,

was his encounter with Satan in single combat. The other part of the fruits or concomitances of this our Saviour's anointment by the Holy Ghost is described at large in Isaiah xi. 6—9: *The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard also shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.* The exact fulfilling of this prophecy in its literal sense, that is, according to the strict propriety of native or unborrowed signification of words, *credat Judæus*, let it be expected by the unbelieving Jew, whose too much credulity to the letter hath brought forth an absolute infidelity concerning the mysteries of his salvation. But whilst he expects such a league and amity betwixt the creatures here mentioned, as the words literally import, he plainly declares himself to be more cruel, more rancorous and untamed, than the most ravenous beast or most venomous creature here mentioned. For neither the sweet invitation of our Saviour, nor all the good deeds which he wrought amongst this people whilst he lived on earth, nor the punishing hand of God, which hath been always heavy upon them since his death, hath to this day wrought such a placable or reconcilable disposition toward us Gentiles, or toward their own brethren which trust in Christ, as they expect in the days of their Messias should be wrought in the wolf towards the lamb, or in the asp or cockatrice

towards the child or sucking infant. We may take this amongst others as a sure argument of our interest in the woman's seed, in that this generation of vipers or serpents (as John Baptist terms them) have exer-
522 cised the venomous enmity of serpents against all that have professed the name of Christ since his death. But the greater their enmity is unto the profession of Christianity, or the longer it hath continued, the more strange and admirable will that reconciliation or agreement seem, which the evangelist records to have fallen out at the time of our Saviour's baptism or anointment; not only between the Jew and the Gentile, but between the Pharisee and publican, between the Sadducee and the Roman soldier, all of them communicating together in the solemnity or sacrament of baptism: for many of every sort here mentioned were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins. This sudden and unexpected obedience of all sorts unto the summons of John's calling to repentance, and the strange alteration which followed upon the sacrament of baptism and the repentance which John preached, as well in the Jew as in the Gentile, is the mystery of the new testament, which the prophet forepictures in the parable of the wolf agreeing with the lamb, of the leopard's reconciliation with the kid, and of the lion's near familiarity with the ox or ass.

The publicans, which before the preaching of baptism and repentance by John were as ravenous as the evening wolves, became as innocent as the lamb: the soldiers likewise, which had been formerly as fierce and cruel as the lion, became as tame and gentle as the ox or cow, and submitted their necks unto the yoke of the gospel: such of the Pharisees likewise, as before their baptism had been as venomous as the asp or cockatrice, did by the worthy receiving of this

baptism, and the grace which God did give them, become as mild and gentle as the sucking infant or weaned child.

57. This I take to be the true interpretation and native meaning, though not of these words which he useth, yet of the prophet himself, and that which the Holy Ghost did purposely intend to express in the forecited place. But may not the prediction, though merely, or for the most part (as was observed) parabolical, have some special reference to the days of Noah, wherein the like reconciliation of hostile and antipathising natures was literally and historically verified and experienced? Yes doubtless, the signs of that old world, and the signs of the time wherein our Saviour was baptized, do as exactly resemble the one the other, as the shape or image of the face in the glass doth the picture that produceth it, or the picture doth the live body which it represents. And besides the power of God, which is able to effect all things without secondary causes or means subordinate, we cannot imagine any other cause or reason that should move the Jew and Gentile, the Pharisee and publican, to communicate together in John's baptism, beside that which moved the beasts of every kind here mentioned by the prophet, and others beside them, to hold better consort in Noah's ark, or at their entrance into it, than they had done whilst they enjoyed their natural liberty in the fields and open air. The true reason of both these strange reconciliations and composals of these inbred foehoods, was that which the great philosopher tells us will unite the deadliest enemies, κοινὸς φόβος, i. e. "the sudden approach or joint apprehension of dread or danger, alike common and alike imminent to both." Now the strange and uncouth dread of this universal deluge could not choose but compel all

The parallel circumstances or signs of the time in the days of Noah and of John Baptist.

the land creatures to keep the peace of nature before they entered Noah's ark, to forbear the exercise of wonted hostility whilst they were in it, and to entertain a general truce whilst the deluge lasted. But
523 what fear or dread of danger, alike imminent to all, could the Pharisee and publican, the Sadducees and the heathen soldiers jointly apprehend, that might move them to like peace or consort during the time of John's baptism, or before he was to baptize our Saviour? The prophet Malachi, to my apprehension, in the conclusion of his prophecy, intimateth some great plague or curse ready to fall, either upon the whole world, or at least upon the land of Jewry; unless it were prevented by such means as the flood might have been, or as the destruction of Nineveh in the days of Jonas was prevented; that is, by humiliation and true repentance. And this humiliation of the people, or turning to the Lord by true repentance, was to be wrought, as Malachi speaketh, by the prophet Eliah, that is, as you heard before, by John the Baptist. The prophet's words are these: *Behold, I will send you Eliah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers unto the children, and the heart of the children unto the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.* Mal. iv. 5, 6. The best interpretation of this place is made by the angel Gabriel, Luke i. 16, 17: *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared to the Lord.* Unless some competent multitude had been thus prepared to entertain the kingdom of grace, or the gospel, or Christ

Jesus the King in their hearts, his first coming had been as dreadful to the whole land as the unworthy receiving of his body and blood was to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xi. God in his wisdom (as some of the fathers very well observe) had so ordained, that the same element by which the old world (besides Noah's family) were destroyed, should be consecrated as an especial means for preservation of the new world. The baptism of water, which John administered, was as a renovation or ratification of the promise which God had made to Noah; a visible sign that God had freed the earth or land of Jewry from that curse which Malachi speaks of, and was withal a visible pledge or sacrament of a new blessing. Whatsoever the curse or anger was which hanged at this time over the people's head, the Dove which descended upon our Saviour at his baptism did bring to this generation a more express release from it, and a more sovereign pardon for all their sins, than Noah's dove did bring of Noah's and his family's deliverance from the curse of waters, or from the danger of the flood, when she came with an olive branch in her mouth. Now, inasmuch as John's baptism by water was as the *medius terminus*, or as the way and passage between Noah's ark and that holy catholic church which our Saviour Christ was now to erect, whereof Noah's ark, as you heard before, was the express type, it is no marvel if that which was literally fulfilled or verified in the days of Noah, were fulfilled according to its emblematical importance or mystical sense in the days of John or at his baptism. The congruity between Noah's ark and the holy catholic church, or new Jerusalem, which was now to descend from heaven, doth herein partly consist. First, not only Noah and his family, but the beasts, as well clean as unclean, which entered into the

ark, were all preserved from bodily destruction: so, not only the offspring of Abraham, (which was prefigured by Noah's family,) nor such proselytes only of
524 the Gentiles as were made visible members of the Jewish church, which answered in proportion to the clean beasts in Noah's ark, but even the worst sort of the Gentiles, such as had most oppugned the children of Abraham in their religion, so they will be admitted into the holy catholic church, or mystical body of Christ, shall be as undoubtedly preserved both in body and soul from the curse of hell-fire, as the unclean beasts which entered into Noah's ark were from the curse of waters.

What was mystically prefigured by the clean and unclean beasts in Noah's ark.

58. That the admission of the heathens, which had been no proselytes of the Jewish church before, into the catholic church now erected by Christ, was prefigured by the unclean beasts, is more than probable unto us from the vision which St. Peter saw, Acts x. 10—16. Peter, after his prayer, *became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, and saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.* The opening of heaven, and the letting down of the vessel, wherein were all manner of beasts, as well unclean as clean, did signify that the kingdom

of heaven, or gates of the new Jerusalem, were now set open to all believers, and the way to true belief manifested to all, of what nation soever they were: the one as open, and the other as manifest to the Italians or Romans, which never had been proselytes, as to the seed of Abraham, or the proselytes which they had made. That matters of fact, or emblematical representations by vision or apparances, are as truly doctrinal as words uttered and understood according to the literal sense, we need no further proof than St. Peter's application of this vision, ver. 28: *And he said unto them*, (unto Cornelius, and his Italian friends and attendants,) *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me* (not in express words, but by vision or representation emblematical) *that I should not call any man common or unclean.* Nor did Peter, in express terms or conceit, deem any man unclean: only had he said, whether in express words, or in thought only, *I have never eaten any thing that is unclean.* Yet, when answer was made, *What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common;* he knew, by the circumstances of the time, and by the tenor of Cornelius's message unto him, that God in this answer did not mean beasts, or things edible, but men, represented by unclean beasts whose use the Lord at this time had sanctified unto his people, in token that men or nations before unclean were now capable of sanctification. The mystery included in this vision was fulfilled in the baptism with the Holy Ghost, and was prefigured by the admission as well of publicans and Roman soldiers, as of Pharisees, Jews, or proselytes, unto the baptism of John. Now St. Peter's own interpretation of this vision will warrant our former

interpretation of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xi. 6, as also of most other places in this prophet, which, as you heard before, were to be understood, not according to the literal, plain, and grammatical signification of the
525 words, but according to their poetical or emblematical importance. Howbeit, when we affirm that the aforesaid prophecy, Isaiah xi. 6, was specially fulfilled, according to its poetical, parabolical, or emblematical sense, we no way deny that it might in part be verified or exemplified according to the plain, literal, or historical signification of the words. Certainly it was so verified in our Saviour whilst he remained, after his baptism, in the wilderness: *And immediately* (after his baptism) *the spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.* Mark i. 12, 13. We do not read that any wild beast or noisome creature (of which the wilderness had plenty) did either annoy our Saviour, or attempt any violence against him whilst he was with them; we do not read that Satan did ever tempt him to encounter with a lion or a bear, as his father David had done, or to tread on serpents or scorpions, to see whether they would sting him or no; because he saw by experience, that this Jesus of Nazareth had power over all these, and whatsoever other creature else that was at Satan's command. He had seen that of the psalmist, Psalm xci. 13, fulfilled in him—*Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon thou shalt trample under feet;* yet he hoped our Saviour's confidence in the authority and power which he exercised over wild beasts and venomous creatures in the wilderness might animate him to try another conclusion, which he thought had as fair and plausible premises in the

One and the same portion of Isaiah's prophecy, which had been only emblematically or parabolically fulfilled in such as came to John's baptism, was historically and literally fulfilled in our Saviour Christ, after his baptism, and in his apostles after his glorification.

scriptures to infer it: *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone* [m]. Where was it written that the angel should take charge of him, lest he should *dash his foot against a stone*? In the very same place (and in the words immediately going before) wherein it was said that he should *tread upon the lion and the adder*, &c. The lion, the adder, and other noisome creatures, would ever and anon be in his way, whilst his way was in the wilderness; and to tread on them was no tempting of God; the angels of God in this case were to protect him; but to cast himself headlong from the pinnacles of the temple was no part of his way. The prophet had foretold no such miraculous protection of him or his followers: for him to have tried this conclusion had been a tempting of God. This and the like were feats better beseeming Simon Magus, or others of Satan's scholars. For this reason our Saviour, after his resurrection, bequeatheth no such power or authority unto his disciples; unto whom, notwithstanding, he communicated the former power of treading upon serpents, of conversing with wild beasts or venomous creatures in such manner, as the forecited place, Isaiah xi. 6, according to the plain, literal, and native signification of the words, importeth. *I beheld Satan*, saith our Saviour, *as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.* Luke x. 18, 19. This com-

[m] Matt. iv. 5, 6.

mission being first drawn about the time that this answer was returned unto John by our Saviour, was more fully ratified upon our Saviour's resurrection, and (as I take it) before that time not put in execution by his apostles or disciples. Thus much the literal
526 meaning of St. Mark's words, chap. xvi. 16—18, to my understanding doth import: *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* He saith not that they should leap down from the pinnacles of the temple, or from the tops of high towers, and not hurt themselves.

59. Again; I would not deny but that the forementioned prophecy, Isaiah xl. 14, which was exactly fulfilled according to the literal allegory or emblematical sense, might be in part fulfilled according to the plain, literal, and proper sense; not at the time of John's baptism, but some years before, yet after John was of age and experience to observe the signs of the time, and their prognostics. Amongst other symptoms of that terrible earthquake which overthrew twelve famous cities in Asia, about the sixth or seventh year of Tiberius, Tacitus relateth this for one; *Sedisse immensos montes, visa in arduo quæ plana fuerint*[n]. The grammatical sense of his words, so far as they reach, is so exactly parallel to the plain literal sense of Isaiah's prophecy, that I cannot English them better than by borrowing the English translation of the prophet, the logical extent of whose words is far more ample than the other's historical relation. Some

[n] Tacit. lib. 2. Annal.

valleys, according to Tacitus, 'were exalted,' and 'some mighty hills were brought low.' The prophet saith, *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low.* According to this logical extent or universality, this prophecy neither hath been nor can be fulfilled in its plain, literal, and historical sense. Howbeit, this and the like visible wonders wrought by the hand of God, though answerable but in part to the plain literal meaning of this prophet, were true and exact emblems of that which the prophet principally meant, and which the mouth of the Lord since hath spoken: *Whosoever exalteth himself shall be brought low; and every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Luke xiv. 11. The exact accomplishment of this sentence, according to the utmost extent of its universality, is not to be expected till the last day. Howbeit, there was a true crisis of it exhibited at the baptism of John, which was (as St. Luke telleth us[o]) *in the fifteenth year of Tiberius.* From that time the publicans and sinners were advanced, and the children of Abraham, which gloried in their birthright, debased. Poor fishermen became heads of the tribes of Israel, greater men in the house of God than Moses and Aaron had been, whilst Moses' successors, the chief priests and doctors of the law, were infatuated, and became like salt without taste or savour. Of this miraculous change, the forementioned prodigies were, as we said before, the types or emblems. As mineralists usually find some homogeneal earth or metal nearer the day[p], as they use to speak, which directs them unto the metal or treasure which they seek; so, before the exact accomplishment of divers prophecies, God usually gives his people a glimpse or hint by the signs of the time, by some real

[o] Luke iii. 1. [p] That is, the surface of the earth.

event or matter of fact, answerable in some measure to the plain literal sense of the prophet, but true emblems or more immediate prognostics withal, of greater mysteries approaching. That earthquake which happened in Jewry, whilst Augustus Cæsar and Anthony tried their fortunes in that great and famous sea-fight at Actium, was in part an accomplishment of
527 the prophet Haggai's literal meaning, chap. ii. 6, 7: *Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations,* &c. This shaking of the nations and of the earth at that time was a sure prognostic of that mystery which the prophet in the verses following foretelleth; to wit, that the glory of the latter temple should be greater than the glory of the former, and that *the desire of all nations,* who was the glory of both temples, the Prince of that peace which God had promised to give in Jerusalem, was shortly to come. For about some twelve years after, Herod erects the temple anew, and made it, even for external pomp and ornament, more beautiful and glorious than Solomon's temple had been, that *the King of glory* and *Prince of peace,* for whose entertainment (though unwitting to Herod) it was erected, might come unto it, and fill it with glory. And within eighteen years after Herod began this work, he was presented in it, and acknowledged by Simeon to be *the light of the Gentiles,* (one desired of all the nations,) *and the glory of his people Israel.*

60. The best commentary upon the late cited passage of the prophet Haggai is a passage parallel unto it in the prophet Malachi: *I will shake all nations,* saith Haggai, chap. ii. 7, *and the desire of all nations shall come.* Who or what this *desire of all nations* should be is not so expressly avouched by this pro-

phet but that some good Christians of later years have questioned whether this place were literally meant of Christ's coming to the second temple, or whether the glory with which Haggai foretelleth the house of God should be filled were the glory of the Son of God incarnate. To prevent this captious criticism, or to satisfy the cavil which carnal minds might pretend for it, the prophet Malachi determines the quality of the person, and the place unto which he was to come: *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.* Mal. iii. 1. But though his coming were to be sudden, was it therefore to have no certain prognostic? Or was it sudden only unto such as neglected the presages of peace, or other signs of the time foretold by the prophet Haggai, ver. 7, *I will shake all nations*, &c. *And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts*, ver. 9? There is no motion in this inferior world but tends to rest, and the more vehement the motion is, so it be not unnatural and destructive, the more pleasant is the rest which terminates it. This experiment in the course of nature is the ground of the prophetical emblem. That unusual shaking of sea and land, that extraordinary commotion of all nations, mustered to that terrible sea-fight between Augustus Cæsar and Anthony, and to the rest of the Roman civil wars a little before, was but a prognostic preamble to that happy and unspeakable peace which the prophet foretold the Lord would give in his temple at Jerusalem. This was that peace of God which passeth human understanding, which was to be diffused throughout the nations, when *the sun of righteous-*

ness did arise, whose beams are clothed with salvation, as the sunbeams are with light. Some glimpse or flashes of this glorious peace which was to issue out of Jerusalem (the vision and fountain of peace) Rome had by reflex, as the moon at the full hath its light from the sun: but as no man within that hemisphere
528 wherein the moon shines in her full strength looketh after the sun that gives the light; so few or none, much delighted with the glory and splendour of Rome, being then at full, did much look after the sun of righteousness, whose approach (though in an opposite hemisphere) the general peace proclaimed at Rome by the shutting of Janus's temple did as certainly prognosticate as the day-star doth the sun's arising. Of this universal peace, that general tax mentioned by St. Luke, chap. ii. 1, was one special consequent. Now this tax was first decreed by Augustus in Spain within three or four years after the battle of Actium: [q] and for this reason it is that the church of Spain did anciently begin their computation of years, not from our Saviour's birth, as we do, but from the date of Augustus's decree for the universal tax first enacted in Spain, though not put in execution till our Saviour's birth, about some twenty-six years after: so that of his birth, as well the earthquake in Judæa as the general wars and universal peace which ensued, were infallible presages unto all such as duly compared the

q Ob eam edicti pronuntiationem nonnulli populi in Gallia et Germania rebellaverunt, suspensoque edicto missi sunt ad illos domandos a Cæsare Tiberius et Drusus; qui postquam omnia pacassent, Romanoque imperio subegissent, anno quadragesimo secundo sui imperii, quo anno Christus natus est, a præside Syriæ Cirino cæteroque orbe edictum Tarraconæ decretum executioni mandatum est, cujus computationem Hispania omnis, non a generali executione per universum facta, sed a die decreti facti retinuit.—Episcopus Geraldensis Paralip. Hispan. lib. 10.

signs of the time with the prophet's prediction. Thus much of those particular prophecies on which John's faith, before he received this answer from our Saviour, was grounded: unto which a little is to be added concerning the peculiar signs of the time which did accompany our Saviour's baptism.

Of the signs of the time which did accompany our Saviour's baptism.

61. It was a perpetual law unto the Israelites, that as every seventh day was a day of rest unto themselves, so every seventh year should be a year of rest unto the ground; it was not in that year to be tilled. Now at the end of every seventh year of sabbaths or rest, that is, after forty-nine years ended, they were to have the year of jubilee. The year wherein John began to baptize and perform his ministry was the seventh sabbatical year, a year most observable by the law; but this law concerning the years of sabbaths or of rest, as the modern Jews themselves confess, was but slenderly or not at all observed by their forefathers after their return from Babylon: and for this sin, amongst others, they have had for a long time no land of their own wherein to observe it. The time of the year wherein John begun to enter upon his office or ministry, as some chronologers[r] rightly gather, was in the beginning of September: in the beginning of which month, as you may read, Leviticus xxiii, they were to observe the feasts of trumpets, by which ceremony the other solemn feasts in the same month, as the feast of the atonement and the feast of tabernacles, were proclaimed. Whether the Jews after their return from captivity did observe this solemnity or neglect it, as they had done the years of sabbaths, I well know not, and much it skilleth not: it sufficeth us to observe, that the mystery foresignified by the ceremony or solemnity which the law commanded, was

[r] Functius Reusnerus.

duly observed and fulfilled by John; for he in the beginning of this month began to lift up his voice like a trumpet in the wilderness, as the herald or ambassador of that God whom in all their solemn feasts, especially in these of the seventh month, the Jews did seek [8], and whom they now might both have seen and felt, unless they had been worse than blind; unless they had winked with their eyes, and wilfully bereft themselves of their senses. Now to awake them out
529 of this slumber, the same God whom they sought, being deprived of this his herald or crier by Herod's cruelty, proclaimed himself, as you may read in the forecited place, John vii. 37, to be that God, or Fountain of life, whereto John by his baptism did direct them: *In the last day, that great day of the feast,* (to wit, the feast of tabernacles, in which feast John's baptism was most famous,) *Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.* Our blessed Saviour in this proclamation acteth but that very part which he had penned for himself: he had dictated it to the prophet Isaiah, as he was the Wisdom and Son of God; by whose Spirit the whole body of scriptures was written, to whom all the prophets and evangelists were but scribes or amanuenses: he now uttereth and acteth it with the voice and gesture of man. But what date doth the penning and writing of it bear? God himself had thus invited them, Isaiah lv. 1, 2: *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and*

[8] Vide Isaiah lviii. 1, 2. Mal. iii. 1.

let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. But this proclamation of our Saviour fell out after John's death, and was the last solemn invitation which he made unto the Jews at Jerusalem; of which, by God's assistance, hereafter. Another special sign of the time by which John's faith was confirmed is from the circumstance of the time and place wherein our Saviour was baptized by him.

At what time of the year, or on what day our Saviour was baptized.

62. I am not ignorant that there hath been an ancient tradition, especially in the Western church, that our Saviour was baptized upon the sixth of January, which we call the Epiphany, or the twelfth day. And the church of England, not willing to dissent from the Romish church save only in matters of great consequence, or in points wherein that church hath no show of antiquity, retaineth in part the liturgy or service which that church had appointed for that day. So you may find the second Lesson usually read in our churches upon that day to be the third chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, wherein the history of our Saviour's baptism is most expressly mentioned; and at the end of the history concerning our Saviour's baptism the second Lesson appointed by our church for that day doth end. But in a part of the liturgy to this day used in the Romish church, to wit, in the anthem appointed for that very day, it is in express terms avouched, *Hodie a Joanne in Jordane Christus baptizari voluit;* "This day our Saviour pleased to be baptized of John in Jordan." Notwithstanding all this, Jansenius, that reverend bishop of Gant, a most learned and ingenuous interpreter of the four evangelists, albeit he died a member of the then visible

Romish church wherein he lived, did not think himself bound to believe either the practice or tradition of that church, because in his judgment it was not warrantable by scripture, specially if they took the words beforecited in the strict and literal sense: for being so taken it contradicts the words of St. Luke, chap. iii. 23: *And Jesus himself* (when he was baptized of John) *began to be about thirty years of age*, or, as he reads, *was almost thirty years of age, when he began to enter upon his function;* which bears date from the day of his baptism. Now if he had been baptized
530 upon the sixth of January, or the Epiphany, he must needs have been either thirteen days above thirty years old, or but thirteen days above twenty-nine. Some Romanists, acknowledging our Saviour to have been baptized before he was thirty years of age complete, account his age from his conception, in respect whereof he was almost thirty, when he was but some few days above twenty-nine years old if we account his age from his nativity. Others would have him baptized in the thirty-first year of his age, accounting his age from his nativity: for, suppose he had been baptized upon the sixth of January, after thirty years complete, he might as truly be said to have been then about thirty years, as if he had been baptized some few days or weeks before he was thirty. But the Greek ὡσεὶ, when it signifies *about* this or that time, doth usually signify rather short than over. And for this reason Jansenius, although he point the original as the followers of this last opinion do, yet liketh much better of Epiphanius's opinion, who was an ancient writer, and a professed collector of ancient traditions or opinions; and he referreth the day of our Saviour's baptism unto the seventh of November. So doth learned Chemnitius refer it to the feast of the encenia, or

Naclantus in medulla scripturæ.

purification of the temple. But some other chronologers of reformed churches, with more probability, refer the day of his baptism unto the tenth of September, which was the feast of the atonement. Upon this day the angel appeared unto Zacharias whilst he was burning incense in the holy place, and foretold the birth and conception of John Baptist.

63. The consonancy of many types and signs of the time with this opinion is very great and very pleasant. But if I should relate them all, you would haply say they are but conjectural, because not grounded upon testimony of scripture. Many of them, I must confess, are neither expressly foretold by any prophet, nor really foreshadowed or prefigured, for aught I know, by any real event or matter of fact, or by any solemnity commanded by the law of Moses. Yet one event there is which followed immediately upon our Saviour's baptism, so expressly related by three evangelists, that it doth necessarily argue some prefiguration or foreshadowing in the law, or books of Moses: for so every remarkable event or action which concerns our Saviour Christ was foreshadowed. The event whereof now I speak was his leading into the wilderness by the spirit to be tempted by the devil; so saith St. Mark expressly, what the others intimate—*And immediately the spirit driveth him into the wilderness.* Mark i. 12. Now the end of his going or being led thither, (though few interpreters have observed it,) was to fulfil the mystery foresignified by the scape-goat, which upon the day of atonement, as we read, Levit. xvi. 21, was to be *led by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness,* after Aaron or his successor, the high priest, *had laid his hands upon his head, and confessed over him all the iniquities of Israel, and all the transgressions, and all their sins,*

The ceremony concerning the scape-goat, and other solemnities used in the feast of the atonement, mystically fulfilled in our Saviour upon the day of his baptism.

putting them, as the text saith, *upon the head of the goat.* Now, as it is evident out of scripture that our Saviour Christ was crucified at the time that the paschal lamb was killed, to the end the world might take notice that he was the Lamb of God whose sacrifice the paschal lamb did prefigure; so, by a certain analogy of faith, we may rightly gather, that our Saviour was *led into the wilderness by the spirit* upon the same day that the scape-goat was by the prescript of Moses' law to be led thither; to the end that John,
531 and such as were present, might believe and acknowledge, that the mystery foreshadowed by the legal ceremony of the scape-goat was fulfilled in this Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had seen and known baptized of John. Wherefore, inasmuch as it is evident out of scripture that the scape-goat was to be led into the wilderness upon the feast-day of the atonement, and inasmuch as our Saviour was led into the wilderness immediately after he was baptized; the conclusion will directly follow, that our Saviour was baptized upon the feast of the atonement, which was the tenth of September. So that John, by this account, was a quarter of a year above thirty, and declining towards the wane, and our Saviour growing up into his full age, being a quarter under thirty, when he was baptized of John. The end of our Saviour's going into the wilderness was (as you heard before) to be tempted of the devil; and, amongst other means, to be tempted especially by fasting. This temptation doubtless did not befall him for his own sake, but that he might fully expiate the sins committed by the Israelites in the wilderness, from whose curse their posterity was not acquitted, until he which was prefigured by the scape-goat had really and bodily undergone the burden of it, as the scape-goat in shadow or ceremony only

had done. One special end of his going upon this day into the wilderness was to carry thither the sins of all that came unto John's baptism; for as many as were baptized by John confessed their sins. And if John did not, no question but He who was to accomplish as well that which was foreshadowed by Aaron as by the scape-goat did put all the sins which had been confessed to John, or to God in John's presence, upon himself, as Aaron did put all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, (being first confessed,) upon the head of the goat before he sent him into the wilderness, Levit. xvi. 21: where we are by the way to note, that this people did always, with their own sins, solemnly confess the sins of their forefathers. The especial sins which the Israelites had committed in the wilderness were, their tempting of God, saying, *Is the Lord amongst us, or no?* and their rebellious murmuring against God, and his servant Moses, in their grievance of hunger and thirst, or in their intemperate longings after their Egyptian diet. For this sin they were stung with fiery serpents; the relics or offsprings of their first parents' curse, whom the old serpent had seduced, and made subject to annoyance by the venomous creatures. And this sin was remarkably and fully expiated by our Saviour's fasting forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, and by his vanquishing the tempter himself, the old serpent, in this temptation, as we say, at his own weapon: for at this time he escaped the malice of the devil; the powers of darkness had no power over him. And this was prefigured by the scape-goat, which being led into the wilderness was to be let go by the man that led him.

64. Probable it is, that John Baptist from his observance how exactly our Saviour had fulfilled the

type of the scape-goat did (upon his return from the wilderness) precollect or prognosticate, that he should as exactly fulfil the type or mystery of the paschal lamb, and hence proclaims him to be that Lamb of God which was to take away the sins of the world, more than three years before our Saviour's apostles or disciples did know the meaning of this mystery, or the congruity between the shadow and the body. It is remarkably said by the apostle, That our Saviour is the body whereof legal ceremonies were the shadows: but you must understand a body so heterogeneal and
532 complete, that no one or few legal ceremonies could perfectly foreshadow it. But as the ceremonies were many, and almost infinite, so every one did foreshadow some part or piece of this complete body; no remarkable part of it, that is, no special event or action which concerned our Saviour Christ, but was foreshadowed by some or other legal ceremony. As his leading into the wilderness upon the day of the atonement was foreshadowed by the ceremony of the scape-goat, so his baptism upon the same day was as expressly foreshadowed or prefigured as any event concerning him either was or could be by the legal ceremony which Aaron or his successor the high-priest were to observe upon the same day, to wit, upon the feast of the atonement: *And Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there: and he shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt offering of the people, and make an atonement for himself, and for the people.* Levit. xvi. 23, 24. Aaron was to wash his body in the holy place, as standing in need of legal sanctifica-

tion from it: so unable was he to sanctify himself or it. Our Saviour's body was washed in Jordan, and by his bodily presence sanctified both the water and the place; yea heaven itself, or that heavenly mansion whereof the Aaronical holy place was but a shadow, was now purified by our Saviour's baptism, as it was afterwards to be cleansed and sanctified by his blood. Between the circumstance of the time when, and the circumstance of the place wherein our Saviour was baptized, the consort is sweet.

65. Our Saviour was baptized by John at Bethabara beyond Jordan, as is evident from St. John the evangelist, chap. i. 28. This was the place (as the name imports) where the Israelites, under the conduct of Joshua or Jesus, the son of Nun, first entered into the land of Canaan, the land of their promised rest. And in token that this was the land which God had promised unto Abraham, and that this was the time and place wherein God did tender performance of his promise unto Abraham and his seed, so far as it concerned the blessing or inheritance temporal, the river of Jordan, in that very season wherein it was accustomed to overflow his banks, did divide itself, and retract the stream, to give the seed of Abraham as safe and dry a passage into the land of Canaan as the Red sea had given them out of Egypt. The reason why Jesus the Son of God would be baptized at this place rather than at any other, and the reason why the heavens did open over him being in this place baptized, was to shew that he was the Jesus which was to conduct them into their rest indeed, into that land whereof the land of Canaan was but the map; that he was the man in whom God's promise unto Abraham, performed in part by Jesus the son of Nun, was to be finally accomplished. The opening of the heavens,

and the emission of that voice from God's presence, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* was a full and satisfactory answer unto all the prayers which the high-priests did annually make when they went into the most holy place. But in what sort Jesus the son of Nun, or that other Jesus the son of Josedech, did foreshadow the Son of God, will come into more particular consideration in a fitter place. Thus far of the prophecies on which John Baptist's belief or warrant for baptizing was grounded, and of the signs of the time expounding the meaning of these prophecies unto him or his attentive auditors before his imprisonment.

533 *The third branch of the second member. The consonancy between those scriptures whereunto our Saviour in this answer referreth John, and the former prophecies on which John's faith was grounded, with the congruity of time and other circumstances or occurrences which unfold their meaning.*

66. *Isdem alimur ex quibus constituimur:* As every thing's first breeding or beginning hath been, such, commonly, is the manner of its nourishment or feeding. Bodies or creatures merely vegetable, as trees, plants, herbs, corn, grass, and the like, seek after no other nutriment than the juice or moisture of the fattened earth, with which kind of nutriment creatures endued with sense cannot thrive or prosper. The meanest food that can give satisfaction to the meanest of them is vegetable, as grass, corn, herbs, or other fruits of the fields or trees. Some kind of creatures endued with sense there be, which must be nourished with others of the same, but of inferior kind: as the

lion will not feed on straw with the ox or ass, but feedeth on these and other like creatures consisting of flesh and blood, as these do on vegetables. So that there be almost as many several sorts of nutriment or feeding, as there be several or distinct kinds of creatures nourished and fed. And not so only, but even creatures of the same kind have their variety of nutriment; though all receive their nutriment from the fatness of the earth, yet is not every vegetable alike content with every soil.

Hic segetes, illic veniunt fœlicius uvæ.

Some soils yield plentiful nutriment to vines or plants, but are not so kind nurses unto corn or herbs. Some kind of mould is good for corn, not altogether so good for grass: and in the same mould wherein rye or oats grow up and prosper, wheat or barley thrives not so well. Now, albeit God allowed greater variety of food or nourishment to mankind than to all other kinds of creatures besides, (for most creatures vegetable, or such as feed on vegetables, are given by express charter unto man for food,) yet we see by experience that some men, either by peculiar constitution of body, or by long accustoming themselves unto some special kind of food, are more delighted, and like better, with that than with any other. And albeit a man by ill diet, whereunto he hath been long accustomed, shall contract any disease or distemperature; yet a skilful physician will be as careful to give some contentment unto custom, as to correct the present distemper. The use or end of all nutriment, in what body soever, is to continue life and health, and to augment strength. And our several refections should be as so many several invitations or entertainments of the soul or spirit of life, that it would be pleased to reside where now it

534 doth, until God provide it of a better residence. Now as every vegetable or sensitive body liveth by its soul, so the reasonable soul of man liveth by faith. The first original or seed of faith is the word of God: the only nutriment of faith, or of the soul which seeks to live by faith, is experiment or observation of events, whether in ourselves or without us, answerable to the word of God, from which faith had its first seeds or beginning. Again, as every man is most bound to observe those rules of scripture which most concern himself or his profession; so those experiences or tastes of God's blessings which suit best with his peculiar kind of life, yield best nutriment unto faith once begotten. Every man's growth in faith is then most firm and solid, when it proceedeth from a perfect growth in those scriptures from which it took first root, and from whose experienced truth it was formerly nourished and increased.

67. Seeing then John's faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as in the Messias then revealed, did spring from God's word uttered by Isaiah the prophet, as from its first root, and had been nourished by sensible experiments and manifest signs of the time, answerable to the prophet Isaiah's predictions concerning John's office; for this reason it is that our Saviour, who best knew what answer would be most fitting and most satisfactory to John's demand, returneth him no other answer than you often have heard read unto you—*The blind receive their sight, the halt go*, &c. The sum of the answer is a brief rehearsal of the various miracles which our Saviour had lately wrought, and continued to work, when John's disciples came unto him. Now all the miracles here recited are but so many sensible experiments of those predictions wherein John's faith concerning the discharge of his office was first grounded,

experiments of the very selfsame kind by which his former faith had been nourished and confirmed. Such experiments they are as could not but strengthen his faith, although it had been weakened by doubt or distrust; experiments in themselves able to revive his faith, although it had been more than half stifled by despair.

68. The special places of the prophet Isaiah, by which John was directed in the execution of his office of preaching repentance or baptizing, and whereon his faith or belief of the Messias which was to come was grounded, have been alleged and expounded to you before. They were for the most part such as did foretell strange wonders to be wrought in the desert; as the bursting out of waters in dry places, turning of valleys into mountains, planting of the wilderness with pleasant trees: all which predictions were only or especially to be fulfilled in their allegorical or parabolical sense, that is, in the strange alterations of men's affections and dispositions which did follow upon John's baptism; yet not wrought by John, but by him that came after him, which was to baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John, before his imprisonment, had seen good fruits of his baptism and preaching of repentance; he had seen the Holy Ghost likewise descend in miraculous manner upon our Saviour; whereby he knew him to be the Anointed of the Lord, and that righteous Branch of David, which was to accomplish whatsoever the prophet Isaiah, or John out of him, had foretold. But as for miracles, John himself wrought none before his imprisonment, nor had he seen or heard our Saviour work any. As indeed he did work no miracles, besides the turning of water into wine at the marriage feast at Cana in Gali- 535
lee, which (as St. John the evangelist telleth us) was

the beginning of miracles, or as a proof or assay of his ability to work miracles when his hour was come; which was not till John was imprisoned. But immediately after Herod had imprisoned John, our Saviour left Judæa, and went into Galilee; where, by God's appointment, the kingdom of heaven, whose approach John at his baptism had foretold, was to be proclaimed and established. The matter of fact, to wit, his going into Galilee upon John's imprisonment, is expressly related by St. John, iv. 1, 2. 3: *When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,) he left Judæa, and departed again into Galilee:* not so much for fear of the Jews, as to accomplish that for which he was sent into the world. The end of his going into Galilee at this time, after John had performed his office of baptizing, and was now to decrease, is more expressly noted by St. Matthew, iv. 11—16: *Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.* In particular to shew you the whole manner how this prophecy was fulfilled by our Saviour's going out of Judæa into Galilee, by his leaving Nazareth, and repairing to Capernaum, would require a longer

discourse than is fitting for the pulpit. Some touch of it perhaps I shall give in the conclusion of our Saviour's answer to John, as it concerns the first place of Isaiah, whereto he referreth him. That which I would now have you to observe out of the evangelist St. Matthew is this: first, that this prophecy was fulfilled in our Saviour's promulgation of the gospel in those places; secondly, albeit our Saviour was anointed King of Judah, and inaugurated to the kingdom of heaven at his baptism, yet he did not take actual possession of his kingdom, or give laws unto his subjects, he did not fully exercise his regal authority over Satan and the unclean spirits his angels, nor establish the kingdom of grace by signs or wonders, until the time of John's imprisonment. Thus much is evident from the words of St. Matthew, iv. 17: *From that time* (to wit, from John's imprisonment) *Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* From the same time he did choose his twelve apostles, and gave authority to them and to the seventy disciples to preach the kingdom, to heal all manner of diseases, and to deliver the people from the tyranny of Satan. From the same time our Saviour began to make that excellent sermon upon the mount, whereof you may read, Matt. v. and vi, which is the fundamental charter by which the kingdom of heaven here on earth is established. Now, albeit John did work no miracles himself, nor had seen our Saviour work any before his imprisonment, yet he had engaged his credit and reputation with the people, (who took him for no less than a prophet,) that Jesus of Nazareth, whom he baptized in Jordan, should work such miracles as Isaiah the prophet had foretold the Rod or 536
Branch of Jesse should work, and accomplish all which the said prophet had foretold should ensue

upon the voice crying in the wilderness. That John had thus far engaged himself for winning reputation to his Lord and Master is evident from the fruits or effects of this his engagement manifested in the people, John x. 39—42. After our Saviour had escaped out of the hands of the Jews, *he went away again beyond Jordan into the place where John at first baptized; and there he abode. And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true. And many believed on him there.* Now, albeit John, after he had seen the Holy Ghost descend upon our Saviour, did never doubt whether he was the promised Messias or no; yet what greater comfort or satisfaction could John receive, being now imprisoned, than to have an acquittance from his former engagement for our Saviour, sealed by such visible and sensible events as are here related, and solemnly acknowledged and delivered by him for whom John stood engaged, who had fully discharged whatsoever John had promised on his behalf? That this answer of our Saviour did really discharge John of his former engagement, and fully acquit him from all suspicion of collusion or compact with Jesus of Nazareth, whom he baptized, and proclaimed to be the Messias, might easily have appeared to the most malicious Jew then living, that would but have compared the miracles here related with the predictions of the prophet Isaiah, laying both of them to heart, and weighing them with the circumstances of the several times. The testimonies are two. The first prediction of the prophet Isaiah, whereto our Saviour in this answer referreth John, and all such as should seek satisfaction from him, is Isaiah xxxv, but especially vv. 3—7: *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are*

of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

69. The testimonies before cited out of Isaiah, albeit they were abundantly sufficient to beget faith in John himself, and others that did unpartially consider and compare them with the signs of the time and other circumstances, of which you have heard; yet were they not so apt or effectual to convince the froward and partial hearers as this last cited testimony was and is. Against the former places, and the expositions which John made of them to himself and to his disciples, pride and malice, or fretting jealousy, might have made these or the like exceptions plausible enough to discontented minds, or to men possessed with a prejudicate opinion either of John, or of Jesus of Nazareth, whom John proclaimed for the Messias. Thus might such men as I now spake of have objected—"It is true which John allegeth for his commission out of Isaiah, that there shall a voice be heard crying in the wilderness, to prepare the ways of the Messias whom we expect; that the Lord will work strange wonders in the desert, upon the Messias's declaration unto Israel. But who shall assure us that this John is to be the crier or herald which Isaiah foretold should usher the Messias into his kingdom; or that this Jesus whom he proclaimeth should be the Branch of 537

Jesse, the Son of David, and that Christ, or Anointed of the Lord whom we expect? The prophet doth not so plainly describe the voice of one crying in the wilderness, either by name, by parentage, or by dwelling, but that it is possible for some other man to come after John which may have better right to that office which he takes upon him, than for aught that yet appears he hath. It is no miracle for a man of better note than John is, to pretend or counterfeit such revelations or expositions of the prophets as he maketh show of; for as yet he hath given us no real proof of his extraordinary calling by any evident miracle or undoubted wonder; and without some apparent miracle his testimony of himself or of Jesus of Nazareth is not concludent. Nor do we in thus saying any way question the truth of Isaiah's predictions; but only whether this man, which takes upon him to be a crier in the wilderness, be the very man whom Isaiah meant in the prophecy alleged by John or no. What if many of such as repaired to this John in the wilderness have upon his baptism, and the doctrine of repentance which he taught, become new men, nothing like to the men they had been! what if some of them, being before more barren than the bramble, have since his baptism shewed themselves more fruitful than the fig-tree or the olive! what if others, of men more ravenous than wolves, have become as moderate in their desires and as harmless in their actions as the silly lamb! what if others, heretofore as fierce and cruel as the leopard and the lion, are now become (to most men's seeming) as tame and gentle as the ox, the ass, or other like domestic creature! what if others, heretofore noted to be as venomous as the asp or cockatrice, have now gotten an opinion in the world (since they were disciplined by John) for being as mild and placable as the sucking infant or the new weaned

child! yet who knows whether this seeming sanctity, or change of mind, may not be counterfeited or pretended only? or whether these men may not within short space return again unto their former temper, and appear in their inbred native likeness?"

70. These and the like exceptions might malice, pride, envious jealousy, or prejudicate opinions have made, with some colour of probability, unto men offended with John Baptist's person, specially if they had made them immediately after he began to baptize. And it would have been an hard task for John to have refuted the objections, or convinced the objectors, out of the testimonies of the prophet Isaiah before cited. But now that pride and malice itself might see the blind restored unto their perfect sight, the lame unto their right use of limbs; now that men haply heretofore offended with John Baptist's person or our Saviour's might perfectly know such as they had formerly known to be altogether truly deaf, to be as well able to hear as to be heard, in that they might hear such as were perfectly dumb to speak distinctly, in that they might see late nasty and loathsome lepers become as clean and comely of body as themselves; nor pride nor malice itself (so they would suffer themselves to be throughly informed in these matters of fact) could move any question whether these and the like were the very men or no whom Isaiah the prophet meant in the prophecy last cited, chap. xxxv. And being once truly informed in matters of fact, to wit, that these miracles were truly wrought, and wrought by that Jesus of Nazareth whom John proclaimed to be the Messias, they could not question whether the same God, which had sent Isaiah the prophet to foretell these strange wonders, 538
had not also sent this Jesus of Nazareth to accomplish that in deed and truth which Isaiah had foretold, and

which was in part foreshadowed in the days of Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah. For albeit the malicious Pharisees or other Jews, whom God had given over to a reprobate sense, might have calumniated our Saviour, as if he had wrought these miracles here mentioned by the power of Satan—as they said sometimes that he did cast out devils by the power of Beelzebub, prince of devils—yet could not calumny, nor malice itself, entertain a suspicious thought that the prophet Isaiah should foretell the working of these miracles by the spirit of lies or of Satan: for Isaiah plainly affirmeth, that their God should bring this salvation which he promiseth: of which salvation the miracles wrought in my text are the undoubted pledges, or rather the first beginnings. So it is said, *Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened*[a]. This word *then* presupposeth a time when those miracles should be wrought; and this time was when God should come to save his people. God did often save his people: but it is one thing for God *to save his people*, and another that God should *come to save his people*. It is one thing that God should *come to save his people*, another, that *God the avenger*, that *God the recompenser or rewarder*, their God in special, should come to save them. Yet are all these branches emphatically contained in the literal sense or grammatical construction of the former words: *Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you*. Isaiah xxxv. 4. This argueth a special manner and an extraordinary measure of salvation. In brief, the sum or extract of the whole chapter is this: The miraculous alterations in the wilderness, as of *waters breaking out*, &c. mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, (elsewhere so

[a] Isaiah xxxv. 5.

often inculcated by the prophet, and fulfilled upon John's baptism,) were sure prognostics or presages of God's coming to save his people: and the particular miracles foretold, ver. 4, and now wrought by our Saviour, were infallible signs or demonstrations from the effect, that the Lord, whose ways the crier in the wilderness was sent to prepare, (that very God of whom Isaiah here speaks,) was come in person to save his people. And it is probable, that John's question, *Art thou he that should come*, &c. had peculiar reference unto this place; at least, our Saviour's referring him to this place would give him full satisfaction that he was to expect no other to come.

71. Besides the evident fulfilling of this prophecy beyond the utmost extent of its plain grammatical sense, the signs and circumstances of the time would much avail John, or others then better acquainted with the histories or customs of the Jewish nations than now we are. Concerning the circumstances of the times wherein Isaiah uttered this prophecy, thus much in general is undoubtedly true: The revelation or prophecy was first conceived or uttered by Isaiah at that very time wherein Sennacherib, king of Assyria, had laid the land of Judah waste, and put Jerusalem unto that great distress whereof you may read in the thirty-sixth chapter of this prophecy, as also in the eighteenth and nineteenth of the Second Book of Kings; which desolation and distress, as also the deliverance from it, the same prophet Isaiah had foretold, as you may read, Isaiah the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters, and the latter part of the seventh chapter. The history of Sennacherib's attempt against Jerusalem, with his mighty overthrow, and of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery, are inserted at large between 539
the thirty-fifth and fortieth chapters of this prophet,

not through negligence of the collectors or compilers of these sacred volumes, but by the special direction of the Holy Spirit, to the end that the reader might compare the historical events with the prophetical predictions, and their evangelical accomplishments with the historical events or portendments. That these prophecies of Isaiah in particular, although literally and historically verified in the days of Hezekiah, did in the opinion of the ancient Jews portend or prefigure some greater mysteries, to be accomplished in latter ages, we need no further testimony than that of the Son of Sirach, xlviii. 21—25: *He smote the host of the Assyrians, and his angel destroyed them. For Ezekias had done the thing that pleased the Lord, and was strong in the ways of David his father, as Esay the prophet, who was great and faithful in his vision, had commanded him. In his time the sun went backward, and he lengthened the king's life. He saw by an excellent spirit what should come to pass at last, and he comforted them that mourned in Sion. He shewed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things or ever they came.*

Of the sign given to Hezekiah for his deliverance from the Assyrian; and what the signs or circumstances of those times did foreshadow.

72. That blasphemous message which Sennacherib sent to Hezekiah by Rabshekah his general happened in the beginning of the seventh sabbatical year; and Hezekiah and his people's deliverance (by Sennacherib's overthrow) was accomplished in the year following, which was the year of jubilee. Thus much the literal sense and meaning of the sign which the prophet Isaiah gave to Hezekiah doth (to my apprehension) directly import. Isaiah xxxvii. 30: *This shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself* (this was the express law of the sabbatical or seventh year, as you may read, Levit. xxv. 3—6.); *and the second year that which springeth of*

the same. This is the express law of the year of jubilee, which did always immediately follow the seventh sabbatical year, as you may read, Levit. xxv. 11, 12: *A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you: ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vineyard. For it is the jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.* How well or ill this people at other times did practise this precept, whilst they lived under kings which were of the race of David, I now inquire not. The Lord at this time had enforced them to make a virtue of necessity, and to rely merely upon his extraordinary blessing upon their fields and vineyards, (specially such as were within their walled cities,) without their own labour or husbandry either in sowing, planting, or reaping; in all which, although they had been disposed to break the law of the jubilee, yet the enemy had prevented them. Howbeit, at the end of two years the Lord had promised deliverance from the present siege, and fear of their potent enemy, as it followeth in the prophet, *And in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.* This sign was a sign of a covenant between God and them [b]; a pledge or earnest, that if they performed the precept of the law concerning the jubilee and sabbatical year, he would perform the thing signified by the ceremony of the jubilee, that is, joyful deliverance from the oppressor. This extraordinary blessing of God upon their plants and vineyards during the time of the siege, was a sign or pledge of God's extraordinary blessings upon the besieged, as well prince as people, after the siege was broken up, and the

[b] Vide Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14, 15.

540 mighty army of the Assyrians destroyed and scattered. For so it followeth in the prophet, Isaiah xxxvii. 31, 32: *And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward: for out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion: the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.*

73. What question soever some curious chronologer may move concerning the computation of time—as whether this deliverance did precisely fall out in the year of jubilee by the law appointed, or in some year substituted in lieu of the jubilee before neglected—sure I am, that whatsoever this year of their deliverance did want of the legal form was abundantly supplied in the reality or substance of the year of jubilee. No servant throughout all the land of Jewry did ever rejoice more at the approach of any year of jubilee than all the free men and masters in Jerusalem, than all the princes and nobles of Judah, than the king himself did rejoice at their deliverance from the yoke of the Assyrian, whose overthrow the prophet compareth unto the overthrow of Pharaoh[c], Isaiah x. 26, 27; *And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him according to the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb: and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up after the manner of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.* Of this strange deliverance from Sennacherib, the strange birth of the Emanuel mentioned Isaiah vii. 14, and of the child likewise mentioned Isaiah viii. 1, (whether that were the same or some other,) were pledges or signs unto

[c] Vide Isaiah xi. 16.

this people. So was the deliverance of Hezekiah and his people a type or shadow of a greater deliverance from a greater enemy in the days of the Messias; and all the joy which was conceived upon the destruction of Sennacherib's army was but a picture of that joy which this people was to expect upon the anointment of their Messias, as may appear from Isaiah ix. 3—6: *Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy* (or, as the latter English hath it, *to him thou hast increased the joy;* or perhaps it may be rendered, *hast thou not increased the joy?*): *they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given,* &c.

74. Nothing more usual with God's prophets than to prefix denunciations of woe and misery to prophecies of comfort, and to make the experienced accomplishment of woes foretold the infallible avouchers of ensuing joys. To omit other instances or exemplifications of this observation, elsewhere handled, the connection of the fortieth chapter of Isaiah (whence John's commission for baptizing with water was derived) with that doleful prediction, Isaiah xxxix. 7, is remarkable. So is the connection of the ninth chapter of the same prophet with the eighth, especially if we set the full point in the Hebrew where St. Jeremy found it, and where Arias Montanus in the Great Bible hath placed it. For so the first words of the ninth chapter, according to our present English, should be the latter end of the eighth chapter, and should be rendered

541 thus: "There shall be no flight, no hope of escape from the straights or anguish that besets him." And according to this reading the former prophecy of woe and misery should here end; after which, the prophecy of joy and comfort doth immediately ensue in the beginning of the ninth chapter, to this or like effect: *The land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali were the first of all the tribes of Israel that were found light* (and swept away by the oppressor); *but in latter days the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations, shall be glorious. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.* I am the bolder to commend this sense to the judicious and learned, because it sets the prophetical prediction, and the evangelical narration, Matt. iv. 15, in an even and parallel course: whereas the ordinary reading and pointing of the beginning of that ninth chapter of Isaiah is so perplexed, that many good interpreters by following it have made the evangelist (for aught that I can see) to fall foul upon the prophet, and the historical event (if this prediction were historically verified in Hezekiah's days) to cross the evangelical mystery related by St. Matthew. Unto both these inconveniencies, but especially unto this latter, another oversight or nonobservance (not so much in point of grammar, as of history or geography) has given great occasion. For it is commonly received, though without all ground, yea contrary to the ground of sacred history, that Sennacherib's army was destroyed by the angel near unto Jerusalem. But could we as clearly gather where Sennacherib's army was destroyed, as we can clearly prove that it was not destroyed about Jerusalem, the fulfilling of this prophecy would be as perspicuous for

the manner or circumstance, as it is remarkable for substance. But the search of the place where Sennacherib's army was destroyed we leave to the schools. For the prophecy itself—*The land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphtali*, &c.—whether it were not at all verified by any real event, until it was accomplished by our Saviour's transmigration from Judæa into Galilee, or whether it were ratified by some historical event in Hezekiah's days—as by the manner of Sennacherib's overthrow—certainly the prophet's special intent and purpose was to give posterity notice, that as the land of Zabulon, of Naphtali, the way of the sea, &c. were first captivated by the Assyrian, so they should be the first spectators of that great victory which the Angel of God, the great Angel of the covenant, was to have over those powers of darkness which the Assyrian tyranny did but foreshadow. And this was the reason why our Saviour upon John's imprisonment, leaving Judæa, went into Galilee, because his sovereignty over Satan was to be manifested, and the kingdom of heaven first proclaimed and established there. And thus much of the former testimony, Isaiah xxxv, whereto our Saviour in this answer referreth John, and of the signs and circumstances of the time wherein the prophecy was first conceived, or of the times immediately ensuing.

75. The second testimony whereto this answer referreth John, and which doth well illustrate and ratify our observations upon the former, is Isaiah lxi. 1: *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.* I must here give you notice, that whereas our English reads, *to preach glad tidings unto the meek*, or *poor*, the phrase in the original is the selfsame with this here in my text; only the verb in the original is

542 the active, because the prophet foretells the office of CHRIST; but in the evangelist, who sheweth the effects or fruits of Christ's office, it must needs be, as you will easily conceive, a passive. Wherefore I must dissent as well from our English as from our Latin translations in the translation of the Hebrew in the prophet, as I did before in the translation of the Greek here in the evangelist. The vulgar Latin, having rightly translated the Greek here in my text *pauperes evangelizantur*, doth vary from itself and from the truth in the interpretation of the prophet: for so he renders it as our English doth, *Misit me evangelizare pauperibus*, "He sent me to preach unto the poor:" whereas if this translation had been constant to itself, it should have been, *Misit me evangelizare*, or *evangelizatum pauperes;* "He hath sent me to evangelize the poor in spirit." And to evangelize them is as much as to imprint the gospel or kingdom of grace in their hearts. And this interpretation of the prophet may be necessarily inferred from the circumstances of the prophetical text itself, by the same arguments which before were used for interpreting the evangelists. *To preach the gospel unto the poor* is only to make them a promise of the kingdom of grace; which cannot be the true or full meaning of the prophet in this place; for this first clause, *Misit me evangelizatum pauperes*, is the general root wherein all the clauses following are contained as branches. Now this Anointed of the Lord here spoken of, did not only promise to bind up the brokenhearted, but did bind them up; he did not only promise liberty to the captives, or the opening of the prisons to such as were shut up, but did set both at liberty. As we say Christ's *bene dicere* is *bene facere*, so Christ's proclamation of liberty to the captives in this place was their actual freedom or

manumission. The enemy's yoke was to dissolve and break upon this ointment's pouring out, as the wax melteth before the fire. So much the prophetical phrase in the original, chap. x. 27, doth import. In like manner, when it is said that he did *evangelizare pauperes*, "evangelize the poor," it is not only meant that he did preach the gospel or glad tidings unto them, but made them actual partakers of that spirit of joy and gladness, wherewith God, *even his God, had anointed him above his fellows.* This often mentioned evangelization of the poor, and meek in spirit, is as much as that which followeth, ver. 3, *to give beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning.* Now if you call to mind what was before delivered, that our Saviour was anointed to his prophetical and kingly office at his baptism by the Holy Ghost descending upon him in the shape of a dove; and that John, upon the first hearing of the city's name where he dwelt, did know him to be that Rod or Branch of Jesse on whom the prophet Isaiah, xi. 1, 2, had foretold the Spirit of the Lord should rest; our Saviour's answer to John is as full and satisfactory as the heart of John or any man living could desire; so apposite and fitting, as nothing but the Wisdom of God could devise. The sum of his answer is in effect this; "Go shew John again that the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of might and counsel, which Isaiah foretold should rest upon the Rod and Branch of Jesse, and which John saw descend and abide upon me in the shape or likeness of a dove at my baptism, is not departed from me, it is upon me still. The ointment wherewith the Spirit anointed me was not given me for mine own use; nor is it spent or consumed, although it powerfully diffuseth itself to all about me, 543

that are not offended with me. By it the poor are made rich, even as rich as kings, instated in the kingdom of grace and of the gospel, and anointed heirs unto the kingdom of glory. By it every broken and contrite heart is healed; such as were shut up are set at liberty; such as were bound are loosed; by it the yoke of the oppressor is dissolved." Now the end of all this change or alteration is, as the prophet Isaiah concludeth, *that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.* Isaiah lxi. 3. *The Rod—the Branch of Jesse—the righteous Branch of David,* were the known glorious titles of the Messiah or Son of David; and it was his glory, whilst he lived on earth, to make others like himself, *trees* or *plants of righteousness.* The prophet's continuation of this allegory in comparing men to trees, even in those places wherein the glory of Christ's kingdom is most plainly, though most elegantly foreshadowed, argueth the sum of all the wonders which he foretold should be wrought in the wilderness, and which he hath represented in such variety of poetical pictures, to be this; "That the dry and barren places of Judæa wherein John baptized, and preached repentance, as also the vast and barren places about the borders of Zabulon and Naphtali, which heretofore had scarce yielded any food or nutriment for tame beasts or cattle, much less any fit habitation or resort for men, should in the days of the Messiah become the most fertile and fruitful nursery of such plants and grafts as God had prepared for the celestial paradise. These trees of righteousness, whereof the prophet speaks, were first planted in the wilderness wherein our Saviour preached the gospel of the kingdom, and wrought miracles. They were instated in the kingdom of heaven, (as feoffees in

trust for the founding of some new society or corporation,) and made supporters or pillars of that church militant which hereafter shall become triumphant.

76. That which sealeth this admirable consonancy between the prophetical predictions and these evangelical events or experiments, is the circumstance or signs of the time wherein these miracles mentioned in my text were wrought, and wherein this message was sent unto John. This is intimated, when it is said, *He was sent to preach liberty to the captives, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord*[d]. These are express characters of the year of jubilee: and *the year of jubilee* is by interpretation as much as *the year of joy or rejoicing*, declared by the sound of trumpets. Now John (as you heard before) began to lift up his voice like a trumpet in the wilderness in the beginning of September, which was every year to the Jews the feast of trumpets. Now this feast of trumpets wherein John began to cry in the wilderness was the latter end of the seventh sabbatical year. Our Saviour, as you heard before, was baptized upon the feast of the atonement, which was the beginning of the year of jubilee, wherein the jubilee was to be proclaimed with trumpet. He was at the time of his baptism, as you heard before out of St. Luke, about thirty years of age; and an exquisite chronologer[e] hath well calculated, that the day wherein he was baptized was the beginning of the thirtieth year of jubilee after this people's entrance into the land of promise. So that every year of our Saviour's private life, before he was declared unto Israel, was equivalent to the accomplishment of a jubilee, which is for fifty years; and the people might expect of him, now coming to thirty years of age, whatsoever had been foreshadowed in all 544

[d] Isaiah lxi. 2. [e] Reusnerus Naclantus.

the years of jubilee or joy, for fifteen hundred years from this people's entrance into the land of promise. Now in this thirtieth year of the legal jubilee our Saviour began to preach the gospel, that is, the joyful tidings of the kingdom, and the liberty of the sons of God; and in truth and substance to accomplish that which was prefigured by the legal jubilee. All the privileges or matters of rejoicing which the legal jubilee did afford are set down at large, Leviticus xxv. 9, 10: *On the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement, shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man to his possession, and ye shall return every man to his family.* And vv. 39—41: *If thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant: but as an hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee to the year of jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.*

77. If you desire to know the evangelical mysteries prefigured by these legal privileges of the jubilee, or fiftieth year, and the manner how all these prefigurations were fulfilled by our Saviour at the time when he sent this answer unto John, you must consider that no servant throughout the land of Jewry, whether an hired servant of the seed of Abraham, or a bondman of the nations, was ever in so great a bondage or hard servitude unto his master, as all the sons of Abraham, yea of Adam, were unto Satan. This acceptable year of the Lord, in number the thirtieth legal jubilee,

being first proclaimed by John, afterwards by a voice from heaven at our Saviour's baptism, and lastly by our Saviour himself after John's imprisonment, was the time appointed by God for the manumission or setting free of his people and all mankind from the bondage and servitude to Satan. Nor did our Saviour only proclaim this acceptable year of the Lord, but did by deed and fact declare himself to be that Lord which had given the law of jubilee unto the Jews, and was now come in person to put the true intent and full meaning of it in execution, which was to set free all such as did hearken unto his voice, and sought to be eased from their slavery and thraldom. Of this present freedom or manumission, even these bodily miraculous cures here mentioned in my text were undoubted effects, and so many ocular or sensible demonstrations. All these defects or imperfections of body, as blindness, lameness, deafness, dumbness, crookedness, and the like, were as the bonds and chains of Satan. Thus much is evidently proved by our Saviour's argument against the ruler of the synagogue, which was displeased because our Saviour had healed a poor woman upon the sabbath day, whose body was bowed together: *Thou hypocrite*, saith our Saviour, *doth not each one of you on the sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?* Luke xiii. 15, 16. St. Peter's words are more general, for he saith, *He healed all that were oppressed of the devil*, Acts x. 38. But the special document and the fullest assurance of this present freedom or manumission by our Saviour, was the oftenmentioned evangelization of the poor in 545
spirit, that is, their participation of that oil of gladness

wherewith he was anointed above his fellows or adherents. This includeth as well *terminum ad quem*, as *terminum a quo*, that is, it includeth not only a manumission or deliverance from the servitude of Satan, but withal an accomplishment or fulfilling of that which was prefigured in the second privilege of the legal jubilee: and this privilege was, that every man might return unto his possession, or to the inheritance of his fathers, although he had formerly pawned or mortgaged it. Now Paradise, you know, was the possession which all of us lost in our first parents, and from entering into it we were all excluded, so long as we continued the servants of sin and Satan: and unto this possession did the woman's seed or second Adam, the Anointed of the Lord, whereof the prophet Isaiah speaks, chapter lxi, actually restore the poor in spirit that lived and conversed with him. This restauration, or returning to the possession or inheritance of their first parents, was first proclaimed, and the possession itself in part first given or bequeathed to his disciples, a little before John sent unto our Saviour this message, whereto my text contains the answer. The proclamation was our Saviour's sermon upon the mount.

78. It is a point worth your observation, that our Saviour beginneth that sermon (which, as we said before, was the fundamental charter of the kingdom of God, or evangelical law) from the beginning of the forecited sixty-first chapter of Isaiah: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me*, saith the prophet, *therefore he hath anointed me to evangelize the poor*, or meek in spirit. *He opened his mouth*, saith the evangelist, Matt. v. 3; that is, after long silence and expectation, he began to proclaim the acceptable year, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Thus our Saviour expressed the meaning of this

phrase in my text, *pauperes evangelizantur:* for the poor in spirit are therefore blessed because instated in the kingdom of heaven, and instated they were in the kingdom of heaven by being evangelized. Another part of his embassage, or effect of his anointment, was to comfort all that mourn, to give to *them that mourn in Sion, beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for sorrow,* Isaiah lxi. The second branch of his embassage or proclamation was, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,* Matt. v. 4. St. Luke, chap. vi, addeth, (which is not expressed in St. Matthew,) that at the same time *he pronounced a woe unto the rich, a woe unto the full, a woe unto such as laughed,* (to wit, in an unseasonable time, when God had called to fasting and mourning) and a *woe unto the vain-glorious, or men-pleasers,* vv. 24—26. As well the woes as the blessings here solemnly pronounced were expressly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, lxi. 2: so it is said, that *the Lord had sent him to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God.* This powerful denunciation of woe and blessing was that *fan* whereof John Baptist speaketh, Matt. iii. 12: *His fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner; but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* Both our Saviour's sermon and John Baptist's description of his fan, as also that of Malachi iii. 2—4, are but exegetical expressions of that fundamental prophecy, Isaiah xxxv. 4, wherein it is implied, that when God should come to save his people he should come as well *Deus ultor* as *Deus remunerator,* as well *God the revenger* as *God the rewarder.* But did our Saviour give any document of this his 546
power at the uttering of this sermon? *It came to pass,* saith the evangelist, *when Jesus had ended these*

sayings, (of woe and blessing, of vengeance and recompense,) *the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* Matt. vii. 28, 29. Thus, when our Saviour expounded the forecited prophecy, Isaiah lxi. 1, in the synagogue at Nazareth, *all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.*

79. The precise time of the year or month wherein our Saviour made this sermon, or returned this answer here in my text unto John, or whether it were returned before he preached the acceptable year of the LORD in Nazareth, cannot so easily be gathered from the circumstances of the evangelist; but, as all interpreters (I think) agree, this answer was given within the compass of that year wherein our Saviour was baptized. Now this was the last legal jubilee which this people were to enjoy, and the first beginning of the evangelical jubilee, which was to continue here on earth until the world's end, to be fully accomplished in the world to come. So that this great mystery of our eternal rest and joy in heaven had first a shadow in the law, to wit, the legal jubilee. Secondly, a picture in the prophet Isaiah, or in the history of Hezekiah, and his miraculous delivery from the Assyrians. Thirdly, a live body in the gospel, or days of the Messias, every way answerable to the picture drawn by the prophet: the first conception of this live body, or evangelical jubilee, was from the day of our Saviour's baptism, and the birth of it from the delivery of our Saviour's sermon upon the mount. Fourthly, the accomplishment, full growth, or perfection of this live body, is to be expected only in the life to come, where our joy, our rest and peace, shall be for measure boundless, and for term endless. Now, according to

these several degrees of shadow, of picture, of life and growth, one and the same scripture, even according to its native and literal sense, may be often verified and fulfilled. All the former prophecies likewise, concerning the planting of the wilderness with pleasant trees, though actually fulfilled according to the importance of the parabolical or emblematical sense in that year of jubilee which Jesus of Nazareth did proclaim, shall not be finally accomplished until the beginning of that jubilee which shall have no end. Thus much is specified, Isaiah lx. 20—22: *Thy sun shall no more go down: neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch* (netser) *of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time.* This last verse, though partly fulfilled in the conversion of whole nations by our Saviour's apostles and disciples, made citizens of the new Jerusalem descending from heaven at our Saviour's baptism, shall not be accomplished until these trees of righteousness be transplanted into the heaven of heavens, and set there by the tree of life. Then shall the least sprig that hath been truly ingraffed into the stock of Jacob, the meanest son of Abraham by faith, become more fruitful in himself than Abraham was in his posterity, and a greater king and lord of more than David or Solomon in their prime. Thus much is included in that saying of our Saviour, Mark x. 29, 30: *There is no man that hath* 547
left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time,

houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. If the least of them that forsake all for Christ's sake grow in this life into an hundred, how great or strong a nation every small one that is not in this life offended in him shall after this life ended become, is inexpressible. But we believe our Saviour, that the least and smallest of such as forsake all for him and the gospel shall have life eternal; and we believe God's word, that life eternal is more than ten thousand lives temporal, though a thousand lives of a man's own be much more worth than a million of other men's lives, whereof we might hope to be the lords and disposers.

80. That other prophecy likewise beforementioned, Isaiah xxxv. 4, though literally verified at God's first coming into the world to be made man, and then punctually fulfilled when JESUS of Nazareth, GOD and MAN, came to John's baptism, is to be finally accomplished when the same Jesus shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Then shall he manifest himself to be *God the avenger* and *God the recompenser*, by pronouncing that sentence from which there shall be no appeal—*Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* The former part of this sentence shall proceed from him as he is God *the rewarder* of all such as diligently seek him; the latter part of this sentence, *Go, ye cursed*, &c., proceedeth from him as he is God *the avenger*. In that accomplishment of days, (which shall utterly abolish all night,) and not before, shall that other part of the same prophecy, Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6, be likewise finally accomplished: *Then the eyes of the*

blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, &c. The eyes of many blind were opened at the time when this answer was given; yet not the eyes of all the blind men then living which were not offended in him, but only the eyes of all the blind throughout Judæa and neighbour regions, that came unto him without offence. At his second coming, the eyes of all, that after perpetual darkness have been finally shut up by death, shall be opened to see the glory of God; so opened to see it without offence, as they shall never be shut again, never be deprived of this beatifical vision. In that day shall all the halt and lame that have not been offended in him, even such as never enjoyed the use of limbs from their coming out of the womb unto their going unto their grave, become more strong and agile than the hart, and more swift and nimble than the roe. Then shall the ears and tongues of all that have been born deaf and dumb be so unstopped and unloosed, as upon the first opening they shall be enabled to hold consort with the quire of angels, to descant upon those hidden mysteries and prophetic songs, about whose literal sense or plain grammatical meaning there hath been much discord amongst greatest critics, and amongst schoolmen continual jars.

This is all which I have at this time to say concerning the three particular branches proposed in the 548
beginning of the second general observation, which was thus: 'What satisfaction this answer of our Saviour, *The blind receive their sight*, &c. could give to John or his disciples, or to any that doubted whether Jesus of Nazareth was he that was to come.' Somewhat more is to be said concerning the conclusion—*Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.*

549 MATTHEW XI. 6.

Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

81. THE universality of the blessedness here promised may partly be gathered by this induction, as you heard before: 'The blind are happy, the lame are happy, the lepers are happy, the deaf and dead are happy: therefore all are, or at least there is none but might be happy, so they would not be offended in me.' But the same conclusion, *Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me*, is more immediately contained in the last clause of the fifth verse, *Pauperes evangelizantur*, and may be inferred by way of syllogism, thus: 'Every one that is evangelized is blessed: but every one that is not offended in me is evangelized: ergo, every one that is not offended in me is blessed.' To be evangelized, that is, to have the power and virtue of the gospel imprinted upon their souls, is the highest degree of happiness that in this life can be expected. *Beatum esse inest evangelizato per se*, κατ' αὐτό. All are so far happy in this life, as they are *evangelizati*, and no further: so that of the major proposition there is no question. The minor, 'Every one that is not offended in Christ is *evangelizatus*,' is thus inferred: *To be poor in spirit*, and *not to be offended in Christ*, are terms, as logicians speak, reciprocal: whosoever is *poor in spirit* is not apt to *be offended in Christ;* and whosoever *is not apt to be offended in Christ is poor in spirit.* And again, none that are *truly poor in spirit* are apt to take *offence at Christ*, and none that are *apt to take offence at Christ* are *poor in spirit.* So that if the poor in spirit be evangelized, then all that are not offended in Christ are evangelized, and all are so far evangelized as they

are not offended in him. For, *evangelium Christi est potentia Dei ad salutem, the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation*[e] unto all such as being invited do come to Christ, without putting stumbling-blocks, or matter of offence, before their own feet. Whether *to be poor in spirit*, or *not to be offended in Christ*, is first in order of time or nature, were not so profitable to dispute. It sufficeth us to know, that Christ was sent to anoint the poor in spirit with the oil of gladness *ex officio*, and that none are poor in spirit but such as are not offended in him. Whence, the points to be inquired after are but two: the first, what it is to be offended in Christ; the second, which be the special offences that are to be avoided.

What it is to be offended in Christ.

82. *Whosoever is not offended.* The word in the original signifieth *a stumblingblock*, or some hard body against which another may so strike or dash, as it may hurt itself, or be hindered in its motion or progress. The Latin, *offendo*, whence our English is derived, (according to its prime and natural signification,) imports as much as the Greek doth. For it is a compound of the old verb *fendo*, now almost out of use amongst the Latins, which signifieth as much as *to touch* or *smite:* whence the Latin *defendere* is as much as *to ward* or *bear off*. This use of the word 550
defend is common in our English. So we call him *a master of defence* that can teach others to ward off blows or strokes, or other annoyances, that by darting or hurling may be intended against them. And amongst mariners, *to fend off* is as much as to prevent or hinder one ship from grating and falling foul upon another. And if we would follow the Latins as strictly in the proper use of the word *offendere* as we do in the use of the single verb *fendo*, or of its compound *defendo*, we should say, one ship offends

[e] Rom. i. 16.

another when one ship falleth foul upon another: for so a Latinist would express the English, *Navis in navim offendit:* for *offendere* is as much as *impingere, to hit* or *dash against*. In this propriety, the Latin *offendere* is used, Psalm xci. 12. *They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Ne offendas in lapidem*, &c. Now, because *to offend* or *dash against* hard bodies is displeasant and grievous unto sense, every thing is hence said to offend us that is displeasant and grievous unto us, or that hindereth us in the prosecution of our will, delights, or pleasures. Hence they are said, in this secondary sense, to be *offended* in Christ, that were displeased with his actions, person, or doctrine. The issue or consequence of this mutual offence taken by men at CHRIST, or by GOD at men which contemn and spurn at his admonitions, is excellently expressed by the prophet Isaiah, viii. 13—15: *Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary to those that sanctify his name, and dread his power: but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken;* namely, as many of both the houses of Israel as did not sanctify his name or dread his power. When he saith, *he shall be for a stone of stumbling*, this imports the issue and consequence, not the end why this stone was laid in Zion. For if the revolting Jews themselves *did not therefore stumble that they might fall*, Rom. xi. 11, the end or reason why this stone was laid in Zion was not that they might either stumble or fall; but many of them have stumbled and fallen, many of them have been broken and ensnared; but they

are broken and ensnared because they stumbled and took offence where none was given: and all this the prophet did foretell, to prevent a scandal or offence, which the weak in faith, or the heathen which had not heard of Christ, would have taken, unless the lamentable event of the Jews which spurned and kicked at this stone had been distinctly foretold, and as it were painted out by the prophet. The meaning is as if he had said; 'I see you will kick or spurn at this precious stone or foundation which God hath promised to lay in Zion; and seeing you will not be forewarned, take your pastime: yet know withal, that this your sporting with or spurning of this stone, which your master-builders will reject, as being too base and unsightly in their eyes, will prove but as the spurning of some wanton creatures at the spring or gin which they easily may remove, but being removed, it will bring the snare or trap upon them, which they shall not be able to remove or escape.' Our Saviour Christ in his humiliation was as the spring or gin at which the Jews spurned; but is since grown into the corner stone, and shall become as the trap, and fall to crush and bruise all such as spurned at or contemned him in the days of his humility, or at this day make a 551
scorn at such humility as he taught. The prophet's speeches in this and like places, wherein he foretelleth what shall after happen in such a manner as he may seem to invite them unto that which afterward they bring upon themselves, is but like that in the poet,

> Rode caper vitem; sed dum tu stabis ad aras,
> In tua quod spargi cornua possit, erit.

But the best comment that is or can be made upon the prophet's words is made by our Saviour, Matt. xxi. 42—44: *Did you never read in the scriptures, The*

stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof. And whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. These chief priests and Pharisees, to whom our Saviour propounded this question, were the master-builders in Hierusalem; but were so far from sanctifying the Lord of hosts, and so far from making him their fear, their dread and sanctuary, as the prophet advised them, that they kick and spurn at him in the days of his humiliation, as unfit to have any place in their visible temple. But shortly after he uttered this parable, he grew into so high and great a place in the true temple of God, that he hath ground the material temple, and the whole city of Hierusalem itself, to dust and powder by falling upon them: although he did no otherwise fall upon them than by suffering his Father's wrath and displeasure (which he had still kept off) to fall upon them that did spurn, or were thus deeply offended at him. The several fates or final issues of every one's ways that have heard of Christ, or been baptized in him, is forepictured in the state or issue of these Jews to whom he was first revealed.

83. Every one is so much more happy, as he is less apt to be offended in him; they most unhappy, that are most offended in him. To be offended in Christ all they are said, and here intended, which being invited to come unto him, or being on their way, are, upon whatsoever occasions or temptations, led another way, or so stumble and fall in the way undertaken by them that they have no heart to go forward, but either

directly retire, or stay at the place where they stumbled or fell. Whatsoever hindereth any man from coming to Christ, or from embracing the gospel, is an offence not given, but taken. Though all be offended in him that have been invited and come not to him, yet the Jews are more properly said to be offended in him than the heathen, which had not sought after him. The offences which the Jews took were for the most part either against his country, or against his parentage, or against his doctrine. This last offence, in respect of these days, is the most dangerous, and that wherein we modern Christians may trespass so much more heinously than the Jews did; as they did more grievously offend than the heathens, in being so deeply offended at their Messias, of whom they had heard, and after whom they had sought.

Three originals of dislike or offence taken against Christ by the Jews.

84. The most and even the best sort of the Jews were apt to take offence at our Saviour's supposed country. Thus when Philip came and told Nathanael, *We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and* 552 *the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph; Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth*[f]*?* Nathanael in speaking this, spake as for the present he thought. This speech (it seems) was *vox populi* in those days. But our Saviour had a more charitable opinion of Nathanael than Nathanael had of his country or place of dwelling: for, notwithstanding this his hard conceit of Nazareth, our Saviour commendeth him for a true Israelite, and one in whom there was no guile. The common offence was quickly removed out of so harmless and humble a heart. Upon a little conference with our Saviour, he acknowledgeth him for that stone, elect

[f] John i. 45, 46.

and precious, which God had promised to lay in Zion. *Rabbi*, saith he, *thou art the Son of God, the King of Israel.* Nathanael, though in part offended with the place of our Saviour's present habitation, was yet truly happy, in that he was not so far offended with it as to refuse at Philip's invitation to come and see whether any good thing could come out of it or no. His prejudicate opinion of Nazareth was less than Naaman's was of Jordan; his success in hearkening to Philip, and repairing to Jesus of Nazareth, much happier than Naaman's was in hearkening to the prophet Elisha, and his washing in Jordan. So useful is that rule which since hath been commended unto us by our apostle St. Paul, *Try all things, and retain that which is best.* But what is best we cannot know without trial or comparison of particulars.

85. The same prejudice which Nathanael had of Nazareth, the people, mentioned John vii. 40, had of Galilee, the country or province whereof Nazareth was a poor city or town: but their prejudice was much more deeply rooted than Nathanael's was; their offence at our Saviour, and the prejudice they had of Galilee was greater, and they by it more unhappy. After our Saviour had made that proclamation in the feast of tabernacles whereof you heard before, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink—He that believes in me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,* John vii. 37, 38.—*many of the people when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of him. And some of them*

would have taken him. vv. 40—44. Thus you see how apt prejudicate opinion is to pick quarrels with the truth, and to pretend insoluble contradictions between scripture and scripture, or between it and the prophet's opinions or interpretations of it; betwixt which there is an admirable and apparent consonancy to such as will with patience and unpartially confer them. It is most true which this people alleged, that the Christ and Messias was to come out of Beth-lehem the city of David; but might he not therefore come out of Galilee? out of Nazareth? *Distinguant tempora, et concordant scripturæ:* one prophet foretells that the Ruler of God's people should go out of Beth-lehem, a place of plenty, a fruitful soil, and by interpretation *the house of bread.* This was meant of his birth and first coming into the world; and that Jesus of Nazareth (which now came out of Galilee) did first come into the world out of Beth-lehem, the city of David, this people had too good proof, so they would have but looked back to the time of their own births or infancy, or have examined the records or history of thirty years forepast. For what was it that moved Herod to 553
slay all the infants about Beth-lehem, but that he hoped among them to have slain the expected Son of David, the hope of Israel? Another prophet foretelleth as distinctly and plainly, that this same Son of David should grow up as a *tender plant out of a dry ground,* and that many should be offended in him (as this people now was) for no other reason than that he was not so beautiful or glorious as they expected their Messias should be, Isaiah liii. 3. The same prophet elsewhere specifieth the town's name wherein this Branch of David was to grow, as you heard before, out of Isaiah xi.

86. But these scriptures were enigmatical, or obscure; and how should the people know their meaning, without the interpretation of the present visible church; that is, of the high priests, the scribes, and Pharisees? This was the plea of the visible church in those days; and this people's reliance upon their visible church, or chief rulers of Jerusalem, (after such a manner in part as the Romanists now do upon the church of Rome, that is, upon the pope and his cardinals,) was the beginning or root of the Jews' apostasy from Christ. That which the Romanist would persuade us to be the rock of our salvation, and rule of our faith in Christ, was to those Jews the only rock of offence, the *line of desolation*, as the prophets call it, to Hierusalem. That very objection which the people in the seventh of John did make was taught them by the scribes and Pharisees, the then visible or representative church. The prejudice which these great rabbies had of Galilee, and the offence which they took at our Saviour, was so deeply rooted in their hearts, that they took it as a proof sufficient to condemn him for a false and counterfeit prophet, because he avoucheth himself to be a true prophet, being, as they imagined, a Galilæan. For when Nicodemus had severely taxed their partiality and unwarrantable proceeding against him, *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? they answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.* John vii. 51, 52. The truth, and because the truth the true church of God, was visible and conspicuous in Nicodemus, or at least in such as the high priest, the scribes and Pharisees, the then visible church, did excommunicate and persecute as seducers, or men seduced by our Saviour.

The scribes and Pharisees were the visible church in the selfsame sense as the Romanists now take it; yet limbs of Antichrist, true types and shadows of these sons of Belial, with whom we have to deal, who after many warnings, and evident convictions of blasphemous intemperancy, are not yet ashamed to bring those arguments for the establishing the authority of their present church, which if they had any truth in them would justify the scribes and Pharisees in condemning our Saviour for a false prophet, a seducer, or blasphemer, yea, would prove Judas to be a better martyr than any their church can brag of, for betraying him.

87. Certainly the men of Nazareth were not offended with our Saviour, either for his country in general or particular, and yet most unhappy men, in that they were upon other occasions deeply offended with him, when he came in love to visit them, and proffered the glorious light of the gospel unto them. *He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the* 554 *prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Luke iv. 16—19. Never did any preacher in the world choose a fitter text, or better suiting with time and place, than this, which by Divine providence offered itself unto our Saviour at the first opening of the book; and the application was as

pithy as the text was plain and pregnant: *And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* Luke iv. 21. Against this doctrine or exposition no exception was taken at the first, but on the contrary (as the evangelist saith) *all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* ver. 22. What was it then that did finally offend them? Nothing besides their own squeamish, nice, and womanish fancy. They were taken with a spice of the selfsame disease whereof our Romish catholic dames are sick even unto death; to whom any stinking weed or loathsome drug, raked out of the sink or puddle of tradition, so it be brought by a quacksalver or mountebank from beyond the seas, relisheth much better than the sweetest flowers that grow either in the prophetical or evangelical herbary; better than the bread and water of life itself, daily proffered unto them by the native and allowed physicians of their souls; men as able to instruct their foreign instructers in any good learning, especially in the glad tidings of the gospel, as they are to instruct the rude and ignorant in matters of treason and villainy. Out of this enchanted humour, or bewitched fancy, the inhabitants of Nazareth, after they had heard our Saviour for a while with admiration, began to say, *Is not this Joseph's son?* or, as St. Matthew relateth it, *Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and his sisters, are not they all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him.* Matt. xiii. 54—57. This offence they bewray in words, but St. Luke intimateth another original of their offence,

deeplier rooted in their hearts, and which upon no provocation, but rather upon our Saviour's intended prevention, did draw them unto most desperate practices. The original of this offence was our Saviour's refusal to work such miracles amongst them as they expected, albeit for this refusal he brought them a ruled case, which should have taught them patience and humility; but as they were affected, it filled their hearts with rage and cruelty. *And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, save Naaman the Syrian*[g]. The implication was, that even the honestly-minded or well-disposed heathen were nearer to the kingdom of God than the stubborn and selfwilled Jew, that boasted in 555
being Abraham's seed and the expected Messias's countryman. Their apprehension of this his meaning, and application of his words unto themselves, did work a general distaste of his person and doctrine: *All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.*

88. They are principally offended with him because he would not do such miracles as they expected; and

g Luke iv. 23, 25—27.

he is therefore unwilling to do any miracles amongst them because they were already offended in him. It is a remarkable censure which St. Mark giveth of this their untoward disposition: *He could do no mighty work there, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.* Mark vi. 5. Certainly those sick folks were not offended in him, otherwise he had not healed them. *He did not many miracles there,* saith St. Matthew, chap. xiii. 58. The reason given by St. Matthew why he did not, and by St. Mark why he could not do *many mighty works there,* was one and the same, avouched in the same terms by both these evangelists; and it was his auditors' unbelief, or that deep offence which they had causelessly taken at him. But haply ye will say, 'The greater their unbelief was, the more need they had of his mighty works to make them believe: and what work can we imagine so mighty, that Christ, who was truly God, could not really effect, so he were willing? And willing it seemeth he was, to have made his countrymen and neighbours of Nazareth true believers: he read his commission and charter of foundation, for establishing the kingdom of heaven here on earth, in their audience: and it is a truth unquestionable, that Christ as now, so then was truly God, and continued in the same, blessed for ever: and unto God nothing is, nothing can be unpossible.' All this is most true in respect of his power; but ye must again consider, that many things which are very possible, and very easy in respect of his power, are altogether unpossible to be done, because they imply a contradiction or contrariety to the eternal rule or law of his goodness, justice, or majesty. Now it is an express branch of his eternal law or equity, not to *cast pearls before swine,* not to save such men by miracles or mighty hand, as con-

temn and spurn at the ordinary means of salvation, or despise the riches of his bounty. The portion of scripture before mentioned (so they had suffered him to have gone forward with the exposition of it, or would have attended to him with that respect and reverence which was due unto the words of God) was more effectual to beget faith in their hearts, than all the miracles that could have been wrought; for faith cometh by hearing, not by sight; and seeing this churlish people had swinish ears and brutish appetites, our Saviour as man could not (without manifest violation of his Father's eternal law, and of his own eternal law, as he was God) feed their eyes or other senses with such miraculous spectacles as were ordained to convert men. Every unruly or exorbitant desire is a rock of offence; every affection, how natural or how civil soever, unrectified, unmastered, or unsubdued, is as a crooked, rugged path, which must be made plain and straight ere we come to Christ. This rectifying, this smoothing or levelling of our desires and affections, is that way of the Lord which John was sent to prepare [h]. Desire of knowledge in arts or sciences, of 556
wisdom or experience in affairs civil and politic, is a desire in itself commendable; yet, if the desire of the one or the other be immoderate, it is as a hill or mountain that must be brought low, ere the way of the Lord (whether from him to us, or from us to him) can become passable. The desire of a sign for confirmation of faith is not unlawful; Abraham desired one, and had it, and so did Hezekiah; and both herein commended: Ahaz had a sign offered, but would not take it, and is by the prophet sharply reproved: yet the immoderate or unseasonable desire of a sign is a

[h] To this purpose the apostle, Heb. xii. interprets the prophet Isaiah, chap. xl. 3, by himself, chap. xxxv. 3.

dangerous root of offence. Both parts of this observation are from St. Paul, 1 Cor. i. 22, 23: *The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* ver. 24. Whom doth he mean by such as are *called?* All that are in any sort, or howsoever called? No, but such as are not merely grammatical, but real passives; or, as others speak, such as are effectually called. In what terms soever we express ourselves, we mean the same persons and the same thing that our Saviour here doth; that is, all they, and only such, as are not offended in him; for they all, and they only, obey their calling.

The more special offences which this age is as apt to take against Christ as the Jews were.

89. The more special roots of more dangerous offences, or more grievous stumblingblocks in the way to Christ, are covetousness, vainglory, ambition, jealousy of reputation, or fear of disgrace. *All these things* (saith the evangelist) *heard the Pharisees, who were covetous: and they mocked him.* Luke xvi. 14. *How can you believe,* (saith our Saviour,) *which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?* John v. 44; vid. 39, 40. *Among the chief rulers* (saith the same evangelist) *many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* John xii. 42, 43. These roots of offence are alike common to the Jews and unto us: we must take heed that we examine not ourselves by comparing our affections towards Christ's person or office with the affections of these Jews towards his office or person. This were the readiest

way to cast us into a pharisaical slumber, or dream of our own righteousness. The only means for us to know whether we be more or less offended in Christ than the forementioned Jews or Pharisees were, is to compare our lives, conversations, and practice, with our Saviour's doctrinal precepts, especially with those fundamental ones solemnly uttered by him in the sermon upon the mount, Matt. v.; amongst which, this is a principal and peremptory one: *I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven*, ver. 20. Now from entering into *the kingdom of heaven*, which is the kingdom of happiness, nothing can bar us, unless we be offended in Christ, who is the way and door unto it. Is there any amongst us that seeketh as earnestly after the praise of men, or after any honour that cometh not from God alone, as the Jews mentioned John xii. and John v.? Is there any amongst us as covetous as the Pharisees were, mentioned Luke xvi.? If any such there be, either in this or any other Christian congregation, be they many or few, all and every of them are as far from the kingdom of heaven, altogether as much offended in Christ, as the fore- 557
mentioned rulers, Jews, and Pharisees were. Is there any amongst us of disposition towards his brother or neighbour, or towards any professing the name of Christ, as implacable or irreconcilable as the scribes and Pharisees were towards publicans and sinners? Let such a man, if any such there be, know and remember, that whilst he continueth in this mood, he is as much offended in Christ as they were; and if he so continue, our Saviour Christ will be as much offended at him in the last day, as at those that crucified him. Is any man as careful for the things of this life as these

Jews were? he is as far from the kingdom of heaven, and the happiness here promised, as the Jews; yea, as the heathen were. It is our Saviour's inference, not mine; *Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* Matt. vi. 31, 32. His precept for our direction followeth; *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.* vv. 33, 34. This is the perpetual law of the evangelical jubilee, whose observance was prefigured in the legal observation of the seventh year of rest, or the year of jubilee: in both which years, as you heard before, the Jews were forbidden to sow or reap; commanded to rely upon God's extraordinary blessing in the sixth year, and to rest contented with such things as should grow of their own accord in the seventh year of rest, or year of jubilee. Not to sow at all, or not to reap in these two years, was a temporary law, merely legal or ceremonial. The moral law hereby prefigured and perpetually to be observed by us Christians, is, *that we buy so, as if we possessed not;* that in sowing or reaping, or in whatsoever other business concerning this life, *we use the world as if we used it not:* that our prime and chief care be in seeking *the kingdom of God,* or matters of the life to come: that every present day we take more pain and care in imploring God's blessings upon our present and future labours, than in contriving means, or disposing of labours, in worldly conjecture most available for procuring our ends, or that good which we seek. This practice and method our Saviour

had enjoined us in that prayer which he hath taught us. First, we pray that God's name may be sanctified, and that his kingdom may come; that his will may be done in earth as in heaven: and in the next place, that he would give us bread this day, for to-morrow and the days following; that is, as the apostle saith, *to cast all our care on him, who careth for us all.* But what avails it us to know by how many ways and means we may be offended in Christ, unless we know withal by what means possible these or the like offences may be avoidable? It is true; and therefore our Saviour teacheth a compendious way or means for avoiding offences. As, first, in this very chapter, Matt. xi. 29: *Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.* To the same end or purpose are all those places of scripture addressed which exhort us to humility, to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and follow Christ. Of these, and other good rules to this purpose, you may read at large, Luke xiv.

90. But others haply will say, What availeth it to propose these good rules unto us, unless it be in our power to practise them? We believe it as a dictate 558
or maxim of faith, that *God gives grace unto the humble,* or unto such as forsake all, and deny themselves; but what is this to us, unless we may likewise be assured that God will either give us grace, or some free-will or natural power, to deny or humble ourselves? Here indeed were the true and fruitful issue of all these intricate controversies which in latter years have much troubled the peace of the church, as well the Romish as the reformed; the controversies, I mean, of election and reprobation, between the Lutherans and the Calvinists, between the Arminians and the Gomarists; as also the controversy concern-

ing concurrence of grace and free-will, prosecuted with eager and bitter contention for these many years between the Jesuits and the Dominican friars. But of this radical controversy about free-will, a point necessary to be known, and yet enwrapped with as many unnecessary intricate disputes, and on all parts as ill-stated and handled (for the most part), as any other question whatsoever, I shall have fitter occasion to speak at large, when I come to handle that argument concerning our servitude to sin, which must be the entrance unto our knowledge concerning Jesus Christ and him crucified; unto both which, these discussions upon this text have been premised.

91. At this time I will only acquaint you with that which I have elsewhere delivered as the true mean between the contrary opinions of the Lutherans and the Calvinists, between the Jesuits and Dominicans, betwixt the Stoicks and the Pelagians, in the point of free-will, or power of man to work or not to work his own salvation. The mean is, that albeit man hath no freedom of will or ability to do that which is good, or to dispose his heart for the better receiving of grace, yet he hath a true possibility or freedom of will to do or not to do something required by God, which thing being done by man God will dispose his heart, and make it fit for his grace; the same thing not being done, or neglected, the neglecter's heart shall every day than other be more indisposed, and more incapable of grace than heretofore. For illustration of this point, I have instanced in two particulars; to wit, in Naaman the Syrian, and the widow of Sarepta, both heathens, and unregenerate. Naaman had no power or free-will to cleanse himself of his leprosy either in whole or in part, yet a true freedom of will to wash or not to wash in Jordan. Now if he had finally de-

parted in such a sullen fit as he begun to take at the prophet's advice, and not at all have washed himself in Jordan, he might have returned home a fouler leper than he came. So then the cure was altogether God's work; Naaman had no finger in it: but to wash in Jordan was in part Naaman's own work, and an exercise of that free-will which God upon Adam's fall doth take from no man. In like manner, it was in the poor widow's choice to give or not to give Elias a cake of her small store of oil and meal; but if she had refused to do as the prophet advised her, God had not multiplied the oil and meal in her cruse extraordinarily. So then in working this miracle God had no partner, it was merely his doing; but in bestowing these alms upon the prophet, the poor widow in part did work: this was an act or exercise of her free-will and loving-kindness, no fruit of sanctifying grace. In like manner, to humble or cast down ourselves before God, that we may be partakers of sanctifying grace, is in part our work, and strictly required at every man's hand that hopes to be partaker of this grace; but the lifting of us up, or our conversion to God, is merely, solely, 559 and totally God's work. In this work we are as merely passive as Naaman was in the cure of his leprosy, or the poor widow's oil and meal in the miracle which God wrought in it; but so merely passive we are not in the former work, in humbling or casting ourselves down: *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,* 1 Pet. v. 6: for if it were as impossible for us to cast ourselves down without God's special grace, as it is to lift ourselves up without it, the apostle's precept, James iv. 10, had been to no better purpose, than if a man should say to a lame child fallen into a deep ditch, 'Come hither, my child, and I will help thee

up:' this were rather to mock a child in his misery, than to promise him any help or comfort. I hope there be none here present, men or women, but think it very possible for them so far at least to cast themselves down before God, as to receive the pledges of Christ's body and blood, as our church commandeth, meekly kneeling upon their knees.

That kneeling at the sacred communion is a gesture most decent, and most consonant to the analogy of faith.

92. But some, perhaps, though I hope not many, are of opinion, that in this case they are not bound to do what they can do, but rather tied not to kneel, though the church command kneeling, because they have no express warrant or rule of scripture so to do: however, they and all that profess themselves to be Christ's servants, have an express command to receive the pledges of his body and blood; and if any be so scrupulous, as not to receive them in any other manner than is expressly commanded or warranted by the scripture, the parties thus affected (for aught I see or know) must not receive them at all, and so they shall evidently transgress the express general rule of scripture, which commands all to receive them. For in all cases of this nature, that is, in all cases wherein the thing itself or action is expressly commanded to be done, and the manner or circumstances of doing it not so expressly commanded, the authority of superiors must rule our affections or opinions for the manner or circumstance of doing what is commanded. Whosoever in this case heareth not his lawful pastor or governor, heareth not Christ: whosoever in this case despiseth the canons and constitutions of the church wherein he liveth, despiseth Christ: whosoever in this case wilfully offendeth against the canons of the church is offended in Christ, and puts a stumblingblock in his own way; yea, he bars himself out of the kingdom of grace, expressly promised here in my text to all that

are not offended in Christ, and in more special sort really exhibited to all that worthily receive this blessed sacrament of his body and blood. But haply it will be farther replied, that albeit our Saviour did not expressly forbid us to receive the sacrament kneeling, yet he hath taught us by his example to receive it after another manner and gesture; and it is more convenient to follow his example, than the ordinance of the church. To this I answer, that our Saviour did not at all receive the sacrament, because he had no sins to be remitted by it; his apostles had, and did receive it, but whether standing, sitting, or kneeling, it is not expressed. All that can be gathered out of the Evangelist is this, that, as they were eating, our Saviour *took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples: so he did the cup likewise.* But whether they received the bread or the cup still sitting, after the same manner as they did at their meat, is not expressed, nor can hence be gathered: for so a man may truly say, that whilst we are at service and prayers, we receive the communion: yet it will 560
not follow, that because all or most of us sit in time of service, we therefore sit at the receiving of the communion. But be it granted, that the apostles eat the bread and drank the wine after the selfsame manner that they eat the passover, yet it would be very hard to express the particular manner of their eating the passover. I am persuaded that there is never a joiner in this kingdom that could make us seats and tables of the same fashion that the tables and seats were of at which our Saviour and his apostles did eat the passover; or in case we had such seats or tables made to our hands, for aught I can imagine, we must have some famous antiquary, or master of ceremonies, to

instruct us how to sit or lie, or to dispose of our bodies at them.

93. This only is certain, that our Saviour himself did eat the passover after the ordinary and accustomed manner of those times, and according to the rites and ceremonies of the then visible church: for which rites and ceremonies, in all particulars, the then visible church had no express rule or pattern, which they were perpetually bound to observe, either given by Moses or the prophets; they had added many circumstances which are not expressed in Moses. Now if our Lord and Master, who had power to institute new rites and ceremonies, did notwithstanding conform himself to those rites and ceremonies of the visible church of the Jews, shall we not herein truly follow the true example of Christ if we do the like? On the contrary, shall we not shew ourselves to be none of his disciples if we use or affect that liberty or singularity which he neither did nor would use, although there were no authority in the earth to command him to conformity? Lastly, it may be objected, that many in the primitive church, who knew the apostles' practice better than the visible church now doth, did not receive the sacrament of Christ's body and blood after the same manner as now we do. I am not ignorant of a scruple which many of the busy-brained masters labour to instil into their auditors' heads: though in other cases they can slight antiquity at their pleasure, yet in this case they have been curiously critical to observe out of the Fathers of the Greek church that they received the sacrament κύψαντες, not γονυπετοῦντες, that is, bowing indeed, but not bowing their knees. All this we grant; for the Greek church at this day receive the sacrament standing on their feet, yet bow-

ing their bodies, not their knees. What is the reason? To make a leg, (as we say,) or to bow the knee, is a ceremony, even in expressions of civil courtesy, ridiculous amongst them. Howbeit they express their several respect to their friends, and to their betters of what rank soever, as distinctly and curiously by several manners of bowing their heads and bodies, as we can do by making legs, bowing the knee, or kneeling upon our knees. And herein they are highly to be commended, for reserving a distinct kind of bending their bodies, in expressing their submission towards God or Christ in their liturgy, or receiving the sacrament: so then, *distingue loca, et concordant consuetudines*, though the Greeks receive the communion standing, and bowing their bodies, whereas we receive it with bended knees without bowing of our bodies; yet herein we fully agree, that both we and they receive it in the most decent and submiss manner, for gesture or deportment of our bodies, that we otherwise know or use: they receive it standing, and bowing the upper part of their bodies, because that is the best and most significant sign of subjection, or submissive obedience 561
that is in use amongst them; we receive it kneeling, because this is the best and most significant sign of submissive obedience that is in use or practice in these western parts of Europe. Did not some amongst us poison their natural and civil affections with presumptuous conceits of extraordinary sanctity, nature itself (to whom our apostle in like case appealeth) would thoroughly inform us all, that we stand bound to receive so great a blessing, as in this sacrament we expect at the hands of our gracious God, after the best and most submissive manner of outward gesture and deportment that we know, or can frame our bodies unto.

94. But if a man should ask, whether the rite or custom observed in the Greek church or in our church be in itself the more decent or significant, or better befitting the use or end of this sacrament; I dare confidently affirm, that the ceremony or gesture observed and commanded by our church doth much better befit the use and end of the sacrament than the rite or ceremony observed by the Greek church doth; better than any other rite or manner can do, though otherwise as decent and fitting, or more decent and fitting, in all other parts of God's service. And my reason, which I commend unto your impartial consideration, is this, that this sacrament was not instituted in remembrance of the first institution of it, or to represent the apostles' manner of receiving of it, but in remembrance of our Saviour's death and passion. Whence I would request such as urge our Saviour's example for a pattern of their behaviour or deportment at the sacrament, to look upon our Saviour's bodily gesture or deportment in the heat and extremity of his passion, wherein he presented himself before his Father in his agony and bloody sweat in the garden. Being in his agony, as St. Luke saith, he presented these supplications unto his Father: *Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thy will, be done.* But after what manner or gesture of body did his perplexed soul utter these earnest supplications, θεὶς τὰ γόνατα, *kneeling*, or *fixing his knees upon the ground?*

95. If I should have spent the whole time allotted only in exhorting or preparing you to the fit and worthy receiving of this sacrament, I could not have said more, or more to the purpose, than the contemplation of our Saviour in this agony doth at first view present unto all of us that will lay it to heart. And it is in a word

this, that you would make his prayer, *commutatis commutandis,* a pattern for your prayers; his gesture in presenting his prayers to his Father a pattern of your gesture or deportment whilst you celebrate the memory of his passion, specially whilst you make application of the benefit of his passion to yourselves, by receiving the visible pledges of his body and blood, which I hope you do not mean to receive without fervent prayer that God will pass over your sins, and not enter into judgment with you. You need not, you may not, interpose that condition in your prayer which our Saviour did in his, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* So great was his goodness towards us, his loving-kindness so tender, that he purchased unto us better certainty and better assurance that our prayers may be heard, than he had that his own prayers should be heard in this particular. Therefore it was not possible that this cup should pass from him, that it might be possible for it to pass from all and every one of us. 562 Pray we then, but let us pray with bended knees, every man for himself, and every man for his fellow-communicant: "Heavenly FATHER, seeing thou art willing so to have it, let thy cup of thy wrath and displeasure pass from us, and let thy cup of thy blessing be ever amongst us: O cause not any of us to drink of that bitter cup which thy only Son our only Saviour hath swallowed for us. Expose us not (good FATHER) to those bloody and grievous conflicts with the powers of hell and darkness which thy Son sustained for us. O lay no more upon us than thou shalt give us strength and patience, through him and for him, to undergo and vanquish. Make us to triumph as conquerors in this victory over hell and Satan, over all the power of the enemy." Thus praying whilst we celebrate the memory of his agony and bloody sweat

with knees bended, as his in that agony were on the ground, and with hearts lifted up to heaven, where he now sits at the right hand of God; my life for yours, my soul for your souls, if herein ye offend either God the Father, or Christ his Son, the Holy Spirit, or your own consciences. To receive this blessed sacrament without some mental prayer were to receive it unworthily. To pray whilst you receive it, and not to pray kneeling on your knees, as your custom is at other prayers, and as the church your mother upon this particular occasion of praying in special enjoineth you, were to be offended in Christ, more offended in him for the church your mother's sake, than the Jews were for Galilee or Nazareth his country's sake. Nor are you only offended in him by refusing to bow your knees when you come unto him, but you give just offence to the common adversary, to whom St. Paul adviseth you to give no offence, much less to give any advantage against the truth; for so you offend *the pillar of truth, the church of God.* Now God of his infinite mercy remove all needless scruples out of the fancies of the weak, and all real obstacles of offence out of the hearts of such as have power to command their knees in this service.

END OF VOL. VI.